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THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER PRACTICES ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

by

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THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER PRACTICES ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER PRACTICES ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine the relationship between a teacher's causal attribution of student behavior and their decision to write a student a discipline referral. This study included a review of data collected from Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) from a purposeful sample of teachers from a large suburban school district in southeast Texas. A purposeful sample of teachers were interviewed in an attempt to provide a more in-depth understanding of teacher's perception of student's behaviors and the disciplinary process. Quantitative data were analyzed using simple linear regression, while an inductive coding process was used to analyze the collected qualitative data. Quantitative analysis demonstrated that there was not a significant mean difference between teacher's gender, race, or years of experience and the number of referrals written.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It is the goal of every educator that every student receives an equal and equitable education. Educators are assigned with the task of assuring that every child has access to the same education and opportunities as the next child. This must happen despite the student's status, age, gender, or ethnicity (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012). A student's environment or home life, which are major factors in his or her social development, must not stifle his or her educational process. An educator must effectively educate a classroom without incorporating a portion of his or her upbringing or personal views (Glasgow, McNary, & Hicks, 2006, p. 10). This can be a daunting task for the most veteran of teachers. This study plans to explore teachers' everyday decisions concerning classroom management in urban school districts. By reading this chapter, the goal is to validate the significance of this study through my research problem and research questions.

Research Problem

In colonial times, Puritans believed that everyone was born with original sin, even children (Eden & Eden, 2017, p. 53). To this historic society, a child was not only born into sin, they were prone to it forever after. Education was used by Puritans to teach children how to read the Bible and curb behavior that would lead to eternal damnation. Religion was the initial piece to this archaic curriculum (Petry, 1984). Given that children were expected to act like adults in this time, classroom management consisted of the teacher applying consistent discipline so childish behaviors would give way to a more disciplined demeanor. Corporal punishment was distributed regularly (Petry, 1984).

According to Ergun (2014), the meaning of discipline originated from the Latin word *disciplina*, which means the teaching of one's disciples. Usually, this referred to instructing an individual into a certain doctrine or belief. For learning to occur, it is imperative that teachers emphasize classroom discipline in their classroom management style (Ben-Peretz, 1998). Not only does discipline ensure a smooth and effective classroom, but it prepares the learners to be successful and productive members of society (Ben-Peretz, 1998).

Without proper classroom management, classroom teachers often find it difficult to meet the instructional demands they face every day in their classrooms (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). The decisions a teacher makes on a daily basis in the classroom have twice the impact on students' achievement compared with school policies of curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and community involvement (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Without the knowledge or skills to discipline a disruptive student, a teacher can do more harm to a student than good. Not only are disruptive students a frustration to their teachers, but they tend to have less academic engagement, lower grades, and perform worse on standardized tests than do the students of a teacher who uses proven classroom management methods (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011). These students also have a negative impact on the students around them. Disruptive students negatively impact the entire learning environment (Beaty-O'Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010).

According to Garrett (2015), teachers, if they are successful managers of their classrooms, organize their rooms to avoid behavioral problems. To avoid problems of discipline, teachers must ensure that rules and expectations are clearly stated, general,

and enforceable. When classrooms are organized in this manner, students know what is expected of them, rules cover several behavioral issues, and the students understand that there are consequences to their actions (Stronge, Hindman, & Tucker, 2004). By organizing their classroom in this manner, disciplining a student is not a major factor. Garrett (2015) explains that effective classroom management consists of five key elements:

- Organizing the classroom space,
- Establishing rules and routines,
- Developing caring relationships,
- Implementing engaging and effective instruction, and
- Addressing discipline issues.

But the question remains, is it possible for these five elements to be effectively applied if the instructor has a perception that the student will be unsuccessful? Exemplary teachers create exemplary schools, while inefficient teachers create lackluster learning environments that are not beneficial to the students or the community (Haberman, 1995). Haberman continued to explain that classroom teachers are responsible for managing students, to ensure that they are actively engaged for a certain length of time and ensure that there is learning in that time period. This is despite the student's behavior. The reasons for negative behavior could include poverty, personality, disabilities, a dysfunctional home, or an abusive environment. The teacher's focus is to ensure that the learning environment is maintained (Haberman, 1995). The teacher's job becomes difficult in an increasingly transitioning population.

The last 35 years have seen an influx of immigrants into the urban school systems, and they have brought a new set of educational issues with them (Crosby, 1999). Now, teachers must manage students' behaviors, see to it they receive a quality education, and ensure that as teachers they address the cultural and ethnic needs of the students. Teachers must design and deliver individual instruction while making sure that it is culturally sensitive (Brown, 2004). For this reason, the government has written laws which mandate that all children receive equal opportunity to an education.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) is a law that ensures that every child with a disability in the United States receives services for their handicap and receives a quality education. The IDEA (2004) governs how states and public agencies administer early interventions, special education, and related services for student with special needs. This bill adds another criterion to the classroom management plan of the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher must now ensure that learning is occurring, behavior is managed, the lessons are culturally sensitive, and they are meeting the needs of all special education students.

Hargreaves (2004) states that many institutions view their classrooms as culturally neutral and that it is the students who bring the personal biases. On the other hand, theorists view misbehavior and lack of motivation as based on the atmosphere of the classroom (Hargreaves, 2004). Educators need to focus on the "unintentional cruelties" of the classroom that, unknown to them, make the students feel "unworthy, uncomfortable, and angry" (Smith & Danforth, 2000). Causal attribution is the perceived notion of an individual's or group of people's responsibilities for their actions (Weiner,

1993). Teachers' causal attributions affect the students whom they are made responsible to educate. Attribution Theory states that the reason an action occurs does not make it right or wrong, but that the perception of the event is what gives it validity (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Jager and Denessen (2015) state that teachers attribute students' personalities to their performance in their classroom.

This research will consider how educators' attributions may affect classroom management in the urban classroom. Causal attributions play a pivotal role in classroom management practices. Causal attributions determine the teacher's response to a breakdown in classroom management based on their perception of the student's reason for the misbehavior (Weiner, 1993). Is a student responsible for his or her own behavior? When an educator perceives the student as in control of his or her disruptive actions, the educator is likely to feel anger or disgust (Weiner, 1993). The animosity a teacher holds for a student can strain the relationship with the student and unintendedly cause the teacher to withhold help or even punish a student. By contrast, a student who is seen as a victim of external factors is likely to receive sympathy and the teacher will be motivated to help (Weiner, 1993).

Further study into these causal attributions is necessary to strengthen student-teacher relationships and decrease problem behaviors. Problem behaviors in the classroom affect not only students, but the teachers as well. Teachers have been found to interact less with students with problem behaviors (Murray & Zvoch, 2010). This loss of relationship results in lower student performance and an increase in the likelihood of teacher burnout (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000).

The loss of perceived idealism and enthusiasm for teaching that eventually leads to poor teaching practices, consequently leading to a lack of student achievement, is a condition that plagues many teachers and is commonly referred to as teacher burnout (Wood & McCarthy, 2002). Lessons that are responsive to a student's identity, culture, and experiences are the right of every student. Culturally responsive teaching is the most effective way to provide high-quality and equitable education for racially and ethnically differentiated communities of students. It is an educator's duty to ensure that no student of any race or culture is left behind (Gay, 2007). An ineffective teacher is one who has inappropriate conversations with students, numerous discipline referrals, demeans or ridicules students, and shows bias (Stronge, 2007). All these qualities prove a lack of classroom management (Stronge, 2007). Research on the effects of teacher attributions on student behavior, which impacts classroom management in urban schools, would be beneficial for future research and future educational programs.

Significance of the Study

This study hopes to provide insight on the causal attributions that affect the urban classroom. By examining teacher responses, I anticipate exploring whether there are disparities and disconnect in teachers' causal attributions in the discipline practices in an urban classroom that affect classroom management based on students' age, gender, culture, and race. Student behavior is more positive when students are surrounded by feelings of belonging, support, relevance, and engagement, and where they feel they have a say in their lives (Jones & Jones, 2013).

People have highly structured and clear social paradigms (Brewer, 2014). These cultural proclivities continue to impact the ways individuals evaluate student performance. Individuals judge others' actions based on the individual's background and experiences (Baker, 2005). Many teachers are not equipped to teach ethnically diverse students (Gay, 2002). The lack of a relationship between students and their teachers has led to a cultural divide between the schools and the communities they serve. This divide continues to overwhelm the educational system and has led to devastating learning experiences for students (Griner, 2012).

Many researchers claim that the environment's cultural tendencies and unfair practices are a classroom reality for ethnically and culturally diverse students (Tyler, Stevens, & Uqdah, 2009). The values and behaviors that many students are reared with are discontinued in classrooms because of the biases held for mainstream cultural norms and values in public school classrooms (Gay, 2000). But are the causal attributions of gender and culture the only assumptions that affect performance in the classroom? Do a student's age or economic status affect a teacher's perception of them? A study needs to be done on the causal attributions that teachers hold regarding student behavior, so that educators can have a better understanding of what drives the discipline process and ensure a fair and equitable classroom.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine how a teacher's causal attributions of a student's behavior affect a teacher's decision to write a discipline referral during his or

her classroom management process. The following questions will guide this study, utilizing a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data.

1. Do teachers' years of experience predict the amount of discipline referrals written?
2. Does a student's socio-economic status predict the number of referrals received?
3. Is there a relationship between a student's grade level and the number of referrals received?
4. Is there a relationship between:
 - a. teachers' race and the race of the student receiving the referral?
 - b. teachers' gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral?
5. Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' gender?
6. Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' race/ethnicity?
7. Do years of experience predict teachers' causal attributions for student behavior?
8. What influences a teacher's classroom management practices?

Definitions of Key Terms

Causal Attributions: the perceived notion of an individual's or group of people's responsibilities for their actions (Weiner, 1993)

Classroom Management: managerial behaviors related to maintenance of on-task student behaviors and the reduction of off-task or disruptive behaviors (Vasa, 1984)

Discipline: the state of obeying the laws or order-related written or unwritten rules of a community in a meticulous and careful manner (Ergun, 2014)

Referable Behaviors: any action that is a form of noncompliance, or classroom disruption, that interrupts instruction or the overall routine of the classroom (Brophy, 2006)

Teacher Practices: procedures the teacher puts into place and the activities they perform that affect student performance (Isac et al., 2015)

Urban School Districts: Urban school districts were defined as comprising schools in a county with a population of 100,000 or more (Abel & Sewell, 1999)

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the need for the study, significance of the problem, research purpose and questions, and key definitions that are attributed to this study. The following content will contribute to former analyses that strive to be a helpful source to the improvement of the impact of causal attributions of teachers on classroom management. The next chapter will discuss the literature review of the topics that will be the basis of this study to further verify the need for further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is an abundance of research focused on how a teacher's classroom management affects their students. Many of today's teachers are not prepared to teach ethnically diverse students who are found in our urban classrooms (Gay, 2001). Teachers reveal that classroom behavior is a high priority for success of students in educational environments, and feel it is often more crucial than academic skills (Koh & Shin, 2008). Studies have found that teachers in urban school districts have greater levels of stress (Abel & Sewell, 2001). This stress could possibly lead to teacher burnout. The purpose of this study is to take a closer look at the biases that affect classroom management in the urban classroom. This literature review will focus on (a) urban school districts, (b) school discipline, (c) classroom management, and (d) classroom bias.

Urban School Districts

Urban schools have diverse populations that are affected by the multitude of issues that plague their environment. Students, especially those in high poverty areas, have an increased risk of negative life experiences (Graves et al., 2017). Out of school suspensions and expulsions tend to be higher in urban school districts (Milner, 2015). Public schools are charged with the responsibility of sustaining a functional classroom despite these outside forces. Classroom management in urban schools should not only focus on academic lessons, but create an environment that allows students to think critically and analytically in and out of the classroom (Milner, 2015). Creating a positive learning environment where these students can succeed requires a functional classroom management plan (Jones, Jones, & Vermette, 2013). In an urban classroom, the teacher

must be aware of a student's cognitive, social, academic, socioemotional, and political needs (Milner, 2015).

Brookover and Lezotte (1979) published a study that delved into the effects of a school's climate on student achievement in inner cities. Eight schools were examined in this study, six improving and two declining. To be considered improving, a school needed to have evidence of 5% increase in the number of fourth-graders passing 75% of objectives while have a decrease of 5% of students passing less than 25% of objectives from 1974 thru 1976. Pairs of interviewers attended each of the schools up to five days apiece. The researchers distributed questionnaires to the staff to be filled out and returned by the end of the visit. They also asked several probing questions in personal interviews with several participating staff. The questionnaire was based on an earlier survey of school climate and cost-effectiveness.

The results were presented in 10 suggestions to improving student achievement and suggested areas where the schools are different. The staff in the improving schools felt a great sense of responsibility in setting the level of expectations for student achievement. Teachers of declining schools had fewer expectations for students to complete high school or attend college (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). Improving schools believe all students have the ability to master the objectives, while the declining school does not believe that their students can accomplish the basic objectives of mathematics and reading. Poor expectations and lack of personal morals may lead to classroom management issues (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979).

Shin and Koh (2008) studied behavioral problems and classroom management strategies for students in urban public-school districts in the United States and Korea. One hundred and sixteen American teachers and 167 Korean public high school teachers were used to compare an American urban Mid-South school district to a city school district in Korea. In this 2003-2004 study, 33% of the American teachers were males and 70% were females, all teachers ranged from 1 to 16 years of experience. The Korean teachers also ranged from 1 to 16 years of experience, though with 72% being males and 30% being females. A Student Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ) developed by Ahrens, Barrett, and Holtzman (1997) and a teacher survey were used as the instruments of this study.

A descriptive analysis revealed that American teachers have more behavior problems than their Korean counterparts. American teachers had a larger percentage of academically difficult-to-teach students than Korean teachers. Fifty-three percent of the American teachers stated that 25% or fewer of their students showed little or no respect to themselves, peers, adults, or property (Shin and Koh, 2008). Lack of proper classroom management may lead to less effective teachers for urban student due to teacher burnout. Teachers believed that a clear set of classroom routines and expectations were needed to ensure proper classroom management. American teachers believed in administrative interventions for problematic behaviors (Shin and Koh, 2008). Administrative interventions included discipline referrals and sending the disruptive student to the administrative office (Shin and Koh, 2008). Parent involvement was the

second choice for disruptive behaviors followed by student conferences (Shin and Koh, 2008).

Abel and Sewell (2001) studied factors that cause teacher burnout and stress in rural and secondary school teachers. Fifty-two rural school teachers (42 women & 10 men) plus 46 urban school teachers (42 women & 2 men), voluntarily participated in this study. A rural school district was defined as a district with schools in counties with populations of 30,000 or fewer. Urban school districts were in counties with a population of 100,000 or more. Two surveys were used for this study. A questionnaire measured teachers' stress levels, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory measured teacher burnout (Abel and Sewell, 2001). A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) revealed a significant difference between urban and rural school teachers' stress from four sources – poor working conditions, poor staff relations, pupil misbehavior, and time restraints. The univariate tests revealed that urban teachers deal with more stress than rural teachers because of work conditions.

Urban teachers' stress from student misbehavior and time constraints was higher than rural teachers' stress from the same source. Urban teachers felt that they received less support for student misbehaviors from administration and fellow teachers. Nonsupport from administration created a negative view of their (urban teachers) work environment (Abel and Sewell, 2001). Misbehaviors in class combined with poor work conditions created an unbearable work environment for urban teachers (Abel and Sewell, 2001). Urban school districts suffering from teacher burnout and student discipline issues have prompted further study into the cause of discipline issues (Kavanaugh, 2001).

Matus (1991) performed a qualitative study on the humanistic approach to classroom management of urban classroom students. Teachers from universities are given generic strategies to deal with classroom problems. They are not equipped to deal with low socio-economic students and the situations that these students bring to the classroom (Matus, 1991). Teachers need training in how to deal with the issues associated with the urban classroom (Matus, 1991).

Teachers in the urban classroom deal with many of the same misbehaviors that suburban teachers face such as insubordination and lack of motivation. School violence and direct teacher defiance is more prevalent in urban classrooms (Matus, 1991). The problems that manifest in the urban classroom are exacerbated by the student's home lives (Matus, 1991). Lack of monetary support causes the students to choose between work or school which leads to chronic absenteeism (Matus, 1991). The chronic absenteeism creates a disinterest in school work and creates low performance. Teachers must be prepared to motivate these students while creating a relationship to understand their personal situations (Matus, 1991).

School Discipline

School discipline is an issue of every school district. School districts thrive to have a structured and fair discipline policy (Blomberg, 2003). Without a proper discipline plan, classroom management falters. School districts need to have an ever-evolving discipline model to ensure structure is maintained and learning is achievable (Cotton, 1990).

To investigate school discipline, Hanson (2011) conducted a study that delved into the effects of Positive Behavior Support implementation associated with student achievement in mathematics and reading, office discipline referrals, and district Alternative Educational Placements (AEP). Hanson looked at two public intermediate high schools with students from the 6th to 8th grades from a district located in Harris County, Texas, during the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 academic school years. Both campuses contained similar demographic of students' ethnicity and economic status. The study included 901 students, which was demographically broken down into the following: 1.3% African Americans, 90.4% Hispanic, 7.5% White, 0.8% Asian Pacific; 83.4% economically disadvantaged, 20.2% limited English proficiency, and 54.4% at-risk. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exam and campus discipline referral data were used as the instrument of study for this research.

Archival data was used from the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008 school years for both campuses. The dependent variables for the study were as follows: The proportion of students who received in-school suspensions, the proportion of students who received out-of-school suspensions, the proportion of 30 students who received expulsions, eighth-grade TAKS scale scores in mathematics for each year of the study, and eighth-grade TAKS scale scores in Reading for each year of the study.

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to determine the significance in difference in the total number of students who received an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion between the two intermediate schools in the study for each year. Hanson discovered that there was no significant change within the school

years he focused on. When speaking to administration and staff, they did not have a clear determination for the outcomes. Administration stated that they had a great deal of teacher retention those school years and staff stated that each class had a different behavioral scope than the others. Hanson stated that a mix of procedures, expectations, relationships, Positive Behavior Support strategies, and trainings in all of the above is needed to improve student behavior.

Similarly, to Hanson (2011), Ergun (2014) hypothesized that disciplinary consequences were unequal across high schools. Ergun used historical data from 2006 to 2009 to study disciplinary practices in eight secondary Turkish schools, of which four were general education campuses and four were vocational schools. From there he gathered every disciplinary infraction for the 2006 to 2009 school years and used them as his sample in the study. The district archives of each high school during the years the study was conducted were the source of the discipline data. The data for the past three years was 110 students per year who received discipline consequences. That year 2.2% of the students required punishments.

It was found that the discipline consequences disseminated during the 2006-2009 school years could be broke down to 60 types of behaviors. Ergun used an SPSS 11 package to analyze the differences of the 60 types of behaviors that require a disciplinary consequence. The researcher later grouped the behaviors by type by behaviors found in literature. Ergun calculated 327 punishments were handed out during the six-year study. The researcher then dispersed the punishments according to nine factors, including age, gender, and grade. Ergun then used Pearson's chi-square test to determine if there is a

significant difference between years and types of behaviors. The test demonstrated a significance between the two of ($X^2 = 53.30$) at the level of .05. There was a relationship between years and the types of behaviors of the students.

The analysis of the distribution of the types of behaviors requiring punishments according the school shows 49.2% of punishments were imposed at the vocational high schools and 50.8% were inflicted at general high schools. Pearson's chi-square test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in the type of schools and the type of behaviors that were administered. The test held a significant difference of ($X^2 = 46.55$) at the level of .05.

Male students were found to be more prone to need discipline consequences than their female counter parts. That year, 84.1% of disciplinary punishments were received by males, while only 15.9% of punishments were given to female students. Pearson's chi-square test was used to determine whether or not there was a significant difference in the gender and the type of behaviors that were administered. The test held a significant difference of ($X^2 = 12.52$) at the level of .05. There was a relationship between gender and the types of behaviors displayed. General education saw more discipline infractions from male students that involved physical violence. Vocational schools showed more infractions from male students but involved cases of nonviolent acts such as forgery and addictive drugs. The majority of the infractions come from the 9th and 10th grades. To ensure any discipline is maintained in the classroom requires an effective classroom management plan (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016).

School discipline in urban schools was closely studied by Kaufman, Jaser, Vaughan, Reynolds, Di Donato, Bernard, and Hernandez-Brereton (2009), to discover patterns to help facilitate and plan interventions such as Positive Behavior Interventions and supports. The study consisted of 1668 students that are 95% low socio-economic status. The referral data came from three elementary schools and a high school in a large urban district in the northwest united states (Kaufman et al., 2009). The school population largely consisted of African American and Hispanics. The staff consisted of largely female (71%) and Caucasians (54%) (Kaufman et al., 2009). 8688 office referrals were gathered during the 2004-2005 academic school year.

The results of the study stated that office referrals differ across grade levels and across gender and ethnicity. Students grade Kindergarten through 6th grade tend to receive higher referrals for aggression, middle school students received a higher number of referrals for disrespect, and high school students received high referrals for attendance violations (Kaufman et al., 2009). This study states that student's developmental stages affect the type of discipline referrals a student receives. African American boys received the majority of the discipline referrals. This is prevalent even in schools where the staff is predominantly African American also (Kaufman et al., 2009). The study suggest that African American boys need to be disciplined differently than other students. Those students should not be expected to sit quietly in their seats, but the focus should be their productivity (Kaufman et al., 2009).

Classroom Management

Without a successful classroom management model, learning is not achievable (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2009). Routines and discipline, together, are needed to have a productive classroom management model. This structure needs to be put into place the first few days of class and reinforced the duration of the school year (Sugai & Simonsen, 2014). Classroom management needs to foster both emotional competence and self-regulation from students (Sugai & Simonsen, 2014). This is especially important in younger elementary students because positive classroom management in elementary fosters positive classroom behaviors and promotes social wellbeing (Gettinger & Fischer, 2014). Misbehaviors in elementary is linked to negative social and developmental outcomes later in their educational careers (Gettinger & Fischer, 2014). Without these proper strategies to guide behaviors, the classroom teacher loses control and learning does not occur (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2009).

To develop an understanding of how classroom management affects the schools, Garret (2008) conducted a study in classroom management to determine the relationship between the instructional and managerial approaches of three teachers who are known for student-centered instruction. This study was implemented in a suburban science and technology magnet elementary school of 615 students serving grades K-6. The three teachers used in this study were chosen through teacher self-reports, principal recommendations, and a willingness to participate in the study. Garret used an instructional continuum adapted from Rogers and Freiberg (1994), and a Pupil Control Ideology to interview and score each of the three educators; Bethany, Raquel, and Mike.

Each instructor was interviewed on three separate occasions: once before observation, once during, and once after the interviews were conducted.

Using the instructional continuum, the teacher's instructional practices were scored. The categories used for the coding of management beliefs and practices were derived from Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clark, and Curran's (2004) characterization of classroom management. The categories were physical design, rules/routines, community building and relationships, motivation, and discipline. Within each category the teachers' teaching strategy was either labeled teacher or student centered. The findings indicated that all three teachers used student-centered instruction. There were hands-on activities, small-group instruction, and discussion. Mike, a teacher interviewed for the study, used a teacher-directed management style, while the other two teachers used a student-directed management style. Mike stated that to perform all tasks required, he needed the students to focus on him, so that outside distractions could not occur.

In another study, Christofferson and Sullivan (2015) studied classroom management training that veteran and novice teachers receive, and the perception of the training. Christofferson and Sullivan picked 204 National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredited teacher education programs to participate in the study. One hundred fifty-seven preservice teachers, 66% female and 17% male, participated in the study. A 36-item survey was developed for this study. The survey asked the teachers questions regarding sources used for classroom management training, if the program offered a stand-alone course on classroom management, content of the classroom course, and their satisfaction with the training.

Christofferson and Sullivan (2015) used a categorical approach to the data collection of the survey. They used an SPSS table to calculate descriptive statistics, as in frequency of responses and cross-tabulation to analyze the participants' satisfaction with the classroom management training they received. Pearson's chi-square test was to check for associations between quantity and type of agreement with statements of preparedness. 84.2% of the classroom management consisted of supervised fieldwork combined with 83.3% of instruction coming via mentoring from a licensed teacher. Only 70.4% of those surveyed felt satisfied with the instruction they received.

Freiberg, Huang, and Stein (1995) designed a study to observe the effects that teachers who are trained in classroom management have on student achievement. Two elementary schools were chosen for this study. Madison school was the program school where the classroom management intervention training, titled Consistency Management, was given and Jones was used as the control school. This training was implemented during the 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 school years. These schools were chosen because they were the lowest-achieving schools identified by the State Education Agency. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT6), and the State Assessment of Academic Skills (TEAMS) were used for the purpose of this study. Also, a Multidimensional Motivation Instrument (MMI) and the Instructional Learning Environment Questionnaire was used to survey teachers and administrators of this study.

Freiberg et al. (1995) used Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVA) to determine significant differences between programs and made a comparison of students' motivation and perception of learning environment. The probability was set at $p < .001$

for MANOVA and at $p < .001$ for Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to adjust for the 15 scales. The teachers who attended the Consistency Management Checklist training had statistically greater achievement among their students on the nationally normed-referenced achievement battery and the state criterion-referenced achievement battery. Madison school not only performed higher the two years the program was implemented, but they also performed higher for the year following.

In a similar study, Bohanon et al. (2012) examined how Positive Behavior Support was implemented in an urban high school to address negative behaviors. The staff and students of a large urban high school located in a large Midwest urban metropolis were used as a sample. The district had 602 schools and 426,812 students and the school had 1,738 students, 90% eligible for free or reduced lunch. Office discipline referrals were used to determine the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Intervention Support. Positive Behavior Support became Positive Behavior Interventions and Support as defined by Sugai and Simonsen, (2012). Data was collected with the use of online discipline systems from 2005 to 2008. The Effective Behavior Self-Assessment Survey was implemented to measure staff's perception of PBIS (Bohanon et al., 2012)

The Change Point Test was used as the instrument of this study because it has the ability to determine significant change in office discipline referrals and analyze data that is dependent. Office discipline referrals were found to be reduced in the majority of the months from 2005-2006. In October and November, referrals increased in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. A 60.0% decrease occurred in all other months when PBIS was fully implemented. A 70.0% decrease was found in 2006-2007 and 2007 and 2008

school years except for the months of September, March, and April. The study revealed that with full implementation of PBIS training, there was a significant reduction in discipline referrals.

Brown (2004) conducted a study to determine if teachers in urban school districts used culturally responsive teaching to guide their classroom management. Thirteen 1st-through 12th-grade teachers were selected from seven American cities for this qualitative study. They were selected based on personal knowledge of their teaching effectiveness or colleagues who recognized them as effective urban educators. The teachers were one African American, two Hispanics, one Sri Lankan, and nine Caucasian teachers with an average of 16 years of teaching experience. Each teacher agreed to the interview developed by Brown. Thirty-four questions were asked consisting of classroom practices, student-teacher relationships, curricular emphasis, and management strategies.

Transcripts and written interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative method to identify themes that might emerge from the data collected. The data revealed five common themes:

1. Building individual relationships with the students builds mutual respect.
2. A community of learning is created to make the student feel like a family.
3. Teachers know to set boundaries and establish a business-like environment.
4. Effective teachers establish congruent communication to build meaningful bonds.
5. Effective teachers are assertive and set clear expectations.

The choices consciously or subconsciously made every day by an educator greatly influence the classroom (Hammang, 2012).

Elementary school is the beginning of a student's understanding of school culture. Students needs differ from grade to grade. Kindergarten students may need more praise than a student in the 5th grade (Owens et al., 2017). Teachers of older student may respond to a classroom violation than a teacher of a younger student (Owens et al., 2017). Though discipline may differ through grade levels, the basics of effective classroom management remain constant. Praise, effective commands, and response to violations of expectations are necessary for effective classroom management during the elementary school years (Owens et al., 2017).

A study completed to examine the rates of behaviors in elementary classroom interviewed 55 teachers who were involved in a study for effective classroom management. The teachers who selected were to evaluate 55 students who were known to have frequent misbehaviors and discuss how they handled this population (Owens et al., 2017). The study discovered that kindergarten students received more discipline infractions than older students (Owens et al., 2017). There was also evidence that teacher praise for positive behavior decreased in the high grades. The study suggested that older students had more self-control and were less impulsive (Owens et al., 2017). The study states that a child's age and maturity must be included in evaluating a student's behavior and planning of classroom management (Owens et al., 2017).

Teachers Effect on Classroom Management

The number one area that teachers request assistance for is disruptive behavior and assistance with classroom management (Oliver, Reschly, & Wehby, 2011). Research states that education programs are not sufficiently preparing novice teachers to meet the needs of students in the classroom (Schwab, 2014). Classrooms with ineffective classroom management have less academic engagement and the students perform poorly academically (Oliver, Reschly, & Wehby, 2011). Teaching cannot take place in a mismanaged classroom (Marzano, 2003). Teacher classroom management practices increase or decrease problematic or aggressive behavior in the classroom (Oliver, Reschly, & Wehby, 2011). A teacher's beliefs effect their classroom management decision making which ultimately lead to the success or failure of their students (Matos, 2014).

Kayıkçı (2009) researched the effects of teacher classroom management skills on student behavior. The study consisted of a survey of 450 teachers from 40 different elementary schools. The teachers were asked 58 questions based on the teacher's classroom management skills that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Kayıkçı states that students from the same classroom will exhibit different characteristics despite the structure of the classroom. Needs, attention, expectation, and skills should differ from one student to the next (Kayıkçı, 2009). Students will behave different based on the structure of the classroom. Teachers need to deal with students separately based on behavior, learning and, disabled students. Teachers need to manage undesirable behavior based on the reason behind the behavior (Kayıkçı, 2009). The only

way to abolish undesirable behaviors is to research and eliminate the reason for the behavior. When teachers base their classroom management strategies on student needs the teaching-learning process will become effective and problematic behavior should decrease (Kayıkçı, 2009).

Classroom management is difficult for experienced educators, but novice teachers trying to learn how to navigate lesson plans, unpredictable classroom events, and parent interactions can be overwhelming (Zuckerman, 2007). Taneri and Ok (2014) took a look at the effects of novice teachers on classroom management and the problems that occur. 275 elementary teachers were surveyed using questionnaires to gather information on diverse topics such as opinion, attitude, preferences, and perceptions of individuals through questionnaires, observation and interviews (Taneri & OK, 2014). All participants of the study were in their first three years of teaching.

Findings revealed that teaching a mixed ability level class, applying and understanding the body of current laws, regulations and rules, developing supporting teaching materials, limited knowledge of primary first 5 years curriculum, and limited knowledge of classroom teaching were the most frequently experienced problems of novice classroom teachers. Teachers who have had four-year college preparation feel more comfortable handling academic situations than alternative certification teachers (Taneri & OK, 2014). Taneri and Ok (2014) state that this difference is mostly due to the college graduate's familiarity with the subject matter compared to an alternative certified teacher limited training and use of the curriculum. The first three years of a teacher's career are the most problematic. These problems escalate greatly due to teacher

shortages because of rapid population growth, poorly devised reforms, inconsistent policies in recruitment processes, and increasing demand for education and experience (Taneri & OK, 2014).

Teacher-Student Relationships

Building a positive relationship with students should be an educators primary focus to prevent negative behaviors (Wubbels et al., 2014). Hammang (2012) stated in his study that building relationships with students and creating meaningful bonds with them are key to organizing a successful classroom model. The teacher-student relationship is vital in correcting misbehaviors in trouble students, especially in younger students (Wubbels et al., 2014). Research states that teachers must engage students on an emotional and behavioral level. This engagement affects both the student's attitudes towards peers and their engagement in their lessons (Yang, Bear, & May, 2018). Not only does the teacher-student relationship aid in a teacher's classroom management, but the relationship also improves on a student's academic and social development (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, n.d.). Student who have a positive relationship with their teacher tends to behave better in class, are more engaged in class, and promote a desire to learn (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, n.d.).

Divoll (2010) studied the how relationships were created with elementary students by making sure they felt known and respected. Through observations of a fourth-grade teacher, her classroom management style, and her students; Divoll studied and measured the relationship between student and teacher. Utilizing a modified version of the Attitudes to School Survey measure student's perception and interviews, Divoll

discovered that the students enjoyed their teacher because she made them feel valued (Divoll, 2010). They stated they made them feel valued because of her interactions with them and the actual financial investment she made on them. Student's felt known, supported, and appreciated (Divoll, 2010).

The teacher being observed believed that the teacher-student relationship was important to student success (Divoll, 2010). Without that relationship component, students are not going to be driven to do their best. All the observed teacher's students passed the Texas standardized state test, and the teacher contributes that to the relationship she has built with the students (Divoll, 2010). The teacher believed that building a relationship does not make you an ineffective disciplinarian. The relationship allows the student to feel you care about their all-around wellbeing (Divoll, 2010).

A meta-analysis conducted by Cornelius-White (2007) took a closer look at the concepts behind student teacher relationships. Teaching requires a certain amount of trust from the student to be successful (Cornelius-White, 2007). Person-centered education includes facilitator flexibility in teaching methods; transparent compromise with learners, school administrations, the public, and the teacher's own self; collaborative and student self-evaluation; and the provision of human and learning resources. These qualities yield student success.

Student empathy is defined as viewing the world through the student's eyes and experiences, but this is rare in education (Cornelius-White, 2007). The teacher must honor the student's voice and adapting to the student's individual and cultural differences. Cornelius-White's study revealed that students thrive in learner-centered

classrooms. Students are more motivated to participate and feel emotionally satisfied in these environments. Teacher-student relationships also yield a reduction in behavioral concerns in the classroom (Cornelius-White, 2007).

A study completed in 2014 investigated how a teacher-student relationship effects on a teacher's classroom management. 440 headstart and preschool teachers were studied to determine teacher beliefs about the teacher-student relationship. The teachers were split into two groups. Half of the teachers were given the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) training to demonstrate and promote positive teacher student interactions (Hamre et al., 2012). The other group of teachers were not given any additional support from administration. At the end of the training all teachers were given the Teachers' Knowledge of Effective Teacher-Child Interactions survey to receive a better understanding of the teacher's knowledge and understanding about teacher-student interactions.

The teachers who received the CLASS training showed a greater mastery of emotional and instructional supportive interactions. The teachers who received the training showed improvement in the quality of their beliefs in teacher-student relationships. They also showed improved interactions with students in their classroom (Hamre et al., 2012). The teachers who participated in the training also believed that mediation was necessary to achieve a student's emotional autonomy. The study stated that the training of teachers in positive teacher-student relationships are vital to improve classroom success (Hamre et al., 2012).

A study written by Wubbels and Brekelmans (2005) states that teacher-student relationships that produce positive outcomes are based highly on teacher influence and proximity to students (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005). The study followed research from a 25-year study utilizing the Questionnaire on Teacher Interactions (QTI). The QTI measures the teacher-student relationship with feedback from both the student and the teacher. It can be used as a feedback tool to measure ideal and self-perceptions of teacher-student relationship (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005).

The findings suggested that teachers who teach with an intentional interpersonal style when they are teaching create a positive climate during the class period. Whole-class teaching is important in developing a positive image for the instructor. This image creates positive communication between teacher and student (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005). A combination of non-verbal behaviors (eye contact and body proximity) and an empathic verbal expression (speaking in a dominant tone) are needed to manage a successful classroom (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005). This style is most often found in experienced teachers which lends to novice teachers needing to be trained to present them as a more experienced educator (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005).

Causal Attributions

Teacher's attitudes and expectations concerning a student's intellectual capabilities may affect the student's performance in class (Beckman, 1976). Causal attributions are defined as how a person perceives an event as good or bad, and are not based on conscious prejudice (McCloud, 2012). Adultification is defined as viewing youth to be able to make decisions at an adult level despite their age and capabilities

(Arain et al., 2013). This is based on stereotypes and negative attributions.

Adultification is prominent in urban areas, especially among African American youth.

Carter, Williford, and LoCasale-Crouch (2014) researched the relationship between teachers' attributions toward disruptive students. A sample of 153 teachers and 432 teachers participated in a large intervention study. The sample consisted of 14.1% state-funded prekindergarten teachers, 45.7% private agencies, and 24.8% Head Start programs, with 96.1% of the participants being women. The average age of the teachers participating was 46, with experience ranging from 0 to 38 years. The students came from a variance of ethnic and social backgrounds, but they consisted primarily of those of lower socio-economic status (Carter et al., 2014).

The teachers rated behavior scenarios from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) on a preschool attribution measure (PTA). The students' disruptions were based on the Teacher-Reported Child Disruptive Behavior: Sutter-Eyberg Student Behavior Inventory–Revised. This instrument was used to count the number of disruptive behaviors that occurred in a class period with the participating students (Carter et al., 2014). Pearson's correlations were used to examine the results of the PTA. A negative result came from the correlations from the statement, "This child did this behavior to annoy me." A positive result came from the statement, "The child shows the same behavior through all settings (Carter et al., 2014).

Christenson, Ysseldyke, Wang, and Aegozzine (1983) studied why elementary teachers in 14 school districts and 9 states had written referrals. Teachers' surveyed gave responses to the reasons they wrote referrals for student behavior. Twice as many boys

(71%) received referrals as girls (29%). Seventy percent of the referrals were for grade K-3 students, average eight years of age. Thirty-nine percent of the referrals were for learning-related issues and 22% were for emotional issues. The teachers attributed 89% of student problems to one of two causes, student issues (53.7%) or home issues (35.6%).

Coleman and Gilliam (1983) conducted a study that explored the perception regular education teachers have about emotional students. The study investigated 139 first- through sixth-grade teachers in an urban school district adjacent to Austin, Texas. With a ratio of 26 students to each teacher, all teachers were required to have a full-time regular education teaching position. Among the sample, 92% were females with an average years of teaching experience of 9.2 years. Each instructor was asked to read seven fictitious behavior descriptions of students and to participate in the attitudinal survey adapted from the Learning Handicapped Integration Inventory, by Watson and Hewett.

Using an ANOVA, the analysis yielded significant effects for behaviors at the .05 level. This supports the premise that different types of behaviors affect the instructor's attitudes toward those students. The results showed that the teachers seemed more concerned about the special education student being mainstreamed than them.

Summary of Findings

Current research states that classroom teachers need to use a combination of classroom procedures, expectations, positive student and teacher relationships, and Positive Behavior Support strategies, and that professional development is needed to improve student behavior in the academic setting (Hanson, 2011). Discipline is a

necessary addition of successful classroom management, but there is a definite imbalance when the dispensation of consequences is handed out. Male students are found to be prone to need more discipline consequences than female students (Ergun, 2014). This can be worse in the classrooms of urban teachers. Urban teachers face discipline issues that are more severe and frequent than their rural counterparts. These behaviors often lead to teacher burnout (Abel & Sewell, 2001).

Classroom management must be student centered. The management style, student-directed management style or teacher-directed management, does not play a factor as long as the instruction is designed with the student in mind (Garret, 2008). Research states that student behaviors can lead to preferential treatment by teachers. Teachers interviewed admitted to preferring particular groups of students (Brown, 2004). The only way to better prepare educators for the rigors of the classroom is ensuring that they are properly trained. Even though several versions of classroom management training are available, many teachers feel that the training is not effective (Christofferson & Sullivan, 2015). The next sections will go more elaborate on the specifics of the subject.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will guide this study will be a combination of Heider's (1958) attribution theory and critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado, Stefancic, & Harris, 2017). The research will draw upon these two theories to determine what, if any, causal attributions have an effect on an educator's classroom management and have an impact on their decision to write or to not write a referral. Though different, these two

theories will impact the study. Attribution theory will guide the study through examining the causal attribution a teacher has resolving discipline issues, and CRT will guide the study by developing the point that different aspect of an individual's background influence their decision-making process.

Attribution is a three-step process (Heider, 1958): (a) the perception of the action, (b) judgement of the intention, and (c) the attribution of disposition. According to Heider, attribution is the perception of responsibility of an action. When judging an action, it is easy to dismiss the facts of a situation and attribute personal feelings into the intent (Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks, 2015, pp. 137-140). Heider argues that people hold each other responsible for negative outcomes with a more negative connotation for lack of effort than for incompetence, and for attempting to obtain social capital than for meeting a dire need (Heider, 1958). This theory will be examined to determine how these attribution processes affect the daily classroom management of the multiple levels of education.

CRT posits that racism is entrenched in every aspect of American culture and that minorities only succeed when that success has enhanced the white majority agenda. Ladson-Billings (1998) proclaimed that racism may be found in all processes regardless of intent. Differential racialization allows the dominant cultural group to augment their arguments for racial superiority and inferiority for different minority groups at different times (Gillborn & Rollock, 2010). Critical race theory will be explored to determine if underlying attributions exist in the classroom management process, to examine the

instructor's rationalization of them, and to determine if professional development influences the classroom management process.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of literature relating to classroom management, classroom biases, and urban school districts. This was done to examine the how the classroom biases affect classroom management in the urban classroom. In Chapter III, methodological aspects of this dissertation are detailed to include the operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sampling selection, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, privacy and ethical considerations, and the research design limitations for this study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine how a teacher's causal attributions of a student's behavior influence a teacher's decision to write a discipline referral during their classroom management process. This mixed-methods study included a review of archived discipline data downloaded from the Texas Education Agency's (TEA, 2015-16) Texas Academic Performance Report from schools that reside in a large urban school district in southeast Texas and which includes a diverse racial demographic of students and teachers. In addition, a purposeful sample of teachers from across all grade levels were surveyed and interviewed for the purpose of discovering potential causal attributions that may or may not affect the writing of discipline referrals during classroom management practices. This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose, questions, hypothesis, research design, the survey being utilized for this study, population and sampling selection, data collection procedures, data analysis, privacy and ethical considerations, and the research design limitations for this study.

Overview of the Research Problem

A major factor that influences teacher burnout and teacher dissatisfaction with their work environment is student discipline (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Classroom management can be the key factor that proves an educator's success in the classroom (Charles, 2006). Causal Attribution is key to classroom management due to the fact that a teacher's attribution of a student's behavior determines their response to the behavior (Weiner, 1993). Despite the importance of classroom management to the field of

education, few studies have been conducted on the subject of classroom management or the link between causal attribution and classroom management (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Classroom management is a complex educational tool that involves planning, facilitating, and monitoring behaviors that are conducive to high levels of learning. However, in education one cannot forget that it also entails creating classroom environments that are personally comfortable, racially and ethnically inclusive, and intellectually stimulating to the majority (Gay, 2006). Therefore, there is a need to further examine the relationship between teachers' causal attributions that affect their classroom management practices and the effects it has on the classroom.

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

This study consisted of two constructs: (a) causal attributions and (b) referable actions. Causal attributions will be defined as the perceived notion of an individual's or group of people's responsibilities for their actions (Weiner, 1993) and will be measured using the *Teacher's Attribution for Child's Behavior Measure* (Simms, 2014). A referable action is defined as any action that is a form of noncompliance, or classroom disruption that interrupts instruction or the overall routine of the classroom (Brophy, 2006), and were measured using archived discipline data collected from the participating school district.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine how a teacher's attributions of a student's behavior influences a teacher's decision to write a discipline referral during their classroom management process. The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do teachers' years of experience predict the amount of discipline referrals written?
2. Does a student's socio-economic status predict the number of referrals received?
3. Is there a relationship between a student's grade level and the number of referrals received?
4. Is there a relationship between:
 - c. teachers' race and the race of the student receiving the referral?
 - d. teachers' gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral?
5. Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' gender?
6. Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' race/ethnicity?
7. Do years of experience predict teachers' causal attributions for student behavior?
8. What influences a teacher's classroom management practices?

Research Design

A mixed-methods research design was used to examine the dynamics between the teachers' practice of classroom management and how their causal attributions of a student's actions influenced the discipline referral process. The significant advantage of this design is that it allows for a more in-depth understanding of the quantitative data

through qualitative research. The use of quantitative and qualitative data gives a better understanding of the research question than a singular approach (Creswell, 2015). For the quantitative analysis, discipline referrals from three high schools, three middle schools, and three elementary schools were retrieved using archived discipline data from TEA for the 2015-2016 academic school year. The discipline data were cataloged by a purposeful sample of teachers from a large urban district in southeast Texas based on years of experience, race/ethnicity, gender, and level of education taught; and student's grade, gender, race/ethnicity, and economic status.

Surveys are used to describe and explore human behavior (Singleton & Straits, 2009). The Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) survey created by Simms (2014), was used to obtain information describing characteristics of a large sample of individuals of interest in a swift manner (Ponto, 2015). The TASBM was distributed to participating teachers using personal emails and Facebook. The survey results were compared with archived data of the school district to determine why a teacher decides to write a referral and does the teacher's causal attribution play a role in the decision process to write a referral. The survey consisted of seven scenarios that evaluated the responder's perception of responsibility of simulated events from a scale of *1 disagree strongly to 6 agree strongly*. At the conclusion of the survey, responders were asked their race, gender, years of experience, level taught, and willingness to participate in an in-person interview, along with their contact information.

Participants were contacted based on the criteria of race, gender, years of experience, level taught for a one-on-one interview, and willingness to participate. The

interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. A semi-structured format was used to ask key questions that defined the area explored and allowed the research to go into further depth (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are used by researchers to obtain understanding of social phenomena or to receive awareness that can only be required from individual interviews (2008). Individual interviews were conducted to allow the research to further probe for clarification (Alshenqeti, 2014). The interviews were conducted at a neutral location agreed upon by the researcher and the participant. The researcher asked the interviewee six scenarios based on classroom management issues. The researcher recorded all interviews on a personal recording device.

Population and Sample

For the purpose of this study, the population is a large diverse urban school district located in southeast Texas. The district has 24 elementary campuses, 6 intermediate campuses, 6 middle schools, and 5 high schools. The district has a total of 47,202 students with 29.6% African Americans, 52.6% Hispanics, 3.7% White, and 12.3% Pacific Islander/Asian. The staff of the district consists of 3,261 full-time teachers with 36.6% African American, 31.2% White, 24.1% Hispanic, 1.3% other races, and 6.2% Asian/Pacific Islander. Table 3.1 represents demographic data from the participating school district. A purposeful sample of teachers from a large urban district in southeast Texas was selected for the purpose of this study.

Table 3.1

Demographic Data of the School District (%)

Demographic Characteristic		Students	Teachers
1. Race/Ethnicity	African American	29.2	38.3
	Hispanic	52.3	24.6
	Caucasian	4.1	29.1
	Asian	12.2	6.0
	Native American	1.4	0.0
	Others	0.7	1.4
2. Gender	Male	52.0	47.5
	Female	48.0	52.5
3. Socio-economic Standing	Economic Disadvantaged	80.4	N/A
4. Teacher Experience	0 to 10 years		58.8
	10 to 20 years		29.7
	Over 20 years		11.4

Instrumentation

An adapted version of the Parent's Attributions for Child's Behavior Measure (PACBM) created by Pidgeon and Sanders (2002), entitled Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) and created by Simms (2014), was used to measure the teachers' possible attributions. The PACBM assesses a parent's attributions for a child's behavior. There are three attributional dimensions addressed in the survey: (a) Blame and Intentionality, (b) Stability, and (c) Internal Causality. The survey measures the extent to which a parent perceives the child to deliberately engage in

inappropriate behavior, the chance that the behavior will change, and whether the action is internal or external. According to Pidgeon and Sanders (2004), the PACBM has adequate reliability ($\alpha = .83$).

The modified PACBM focuses on whether the attributor (the teacher) observes that the causes of their student's behavior are controllable by the student (Simms, 2014). As a result, it can be used to measure the extent to which teacher's attributions are applied to the teacher's classroom management and in return in the referral a student receives. To adapt the PACBM for educational use, the scenarios from the PACBM were switched to student encounters. The same type of behaviors was utilized for the TASBM (hitting, throwing objects, and noncompliance). Each type of behavior problem was used in two separate scenarios. An opened-ended question was added to each scenario for the teachers to rationalize their thoughts about the scenario (Simms, 2014). Pidgeon and Sanders reviewed the TASBM to ensure that it was similar to the PACBM and would be appropriate for use with educators (Simms, 2014).

The TASBM consists of 12 items between two sections. Section A asked the teachers six scenarios of students displaying problematic behaviors such as hitting, destroying property, being compliant, etc. The teachers were asked to read the scenarios and input their classroom management techniques to complete the questions. The survey consists of a 6-point Likert scale: *1-Disagree Strongly; 2-Disagree; 3-Disagree Somewhat; 4-Agree Somewhat; 5-Agree; 6-Agree Strongly*. Section A will include 30 items (five per scenario) and three attributional subscales. The first subscale measured the scope of the behavior that can be deemed student controllable or intentional; the

second measured the scope of behaviors that are out of the student's control; and the third measured the scope of the behavior that was internalized in the student. The maximum and minimal score that may be attained by each attributional subscale is as follows: Blame and Intentionality 72 (max) to 12 (min), Stability 36 (max) and 6 (min), and Internal Causality 36 (max) and 6 (min).

Section B contains a scenario for which teachers were asked whether a predetermined classroom management strategy was effective to deter the behavior presented. For 12 items, the teachers reflected on the first scenario and clicked the number (1-6) to indicate the belief of the effectiveness of the strategy. The rating scale was: *1-Very Ineffective; 2-Ineffective; 3-Somewhat Ineffective; 4-Somewhat Effective; 5-Effective; 6-Very Effective*. The maximum and minimum score for section B will be as follows: Supportive Intervention Preference 36 (max) to 6 (min) and Unsupportive Intervention Preference 36 (max) to 6 (min). Each section was scored based on the TASBM assigned rubric for the following subscales: Blame and Intentional, Stable, and Internal, see specific definitions in Table 3.2. The scores are separated by subscales. The higher a respondent's total in a subscale, the better research can predict the respondent's attribution for that or a similar event. Table 3.2 displays each subscale present in this study.

Table 3.2

Teacher's Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) Subscales

Sub-Scale	Description (Pidgeon & Sanders, 2002)	Sample Item	Item Number per Sub-Scale	Reliability
1. Blame and Intentionality	Measures the extent to which the participants perceive that their student deliberately engages in inappropriate behavior	You tell student to finish an assignment. They look you in the eyes and walks out of class	2.2, 2.4, 3.2, 3.4, 4.2, 4.4, 5.2, 5.4, & 6.4	$\alpha = .83$
2. Stability	Assesses the extent to which participants feel that the causes of their student's behavior are or are not likely to change	The participants tell a student to sit down and they say "No"	1.3, 2.3, 3.3, 4.3, 5.3 & 6.3	$\alpha = .77$
3. Internal Causality	Assesses teachers' thinking about whether the cause of their students' behavior is something internal or external to the child.	A student strikes another student	6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, & 6.6	$\alpha = .89$

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, the researcher gained approval from the University of Houston–Clear Lake's (UHCL) Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) and the school district in which the study took place. Following approval, all participating campus principals were contacted to discuss the purpose of the study and

process for collecting teacher surveys. Using the participating district's discipline archival system, 2015-2016 school year's discipline data (e.g., district size, racial percentages, and teacher demographics) were downloaded and merged into SPSS database for further analysis.

A purposeful sample of a group of teachers was selected to be interviewed, who participated voluntarily for a 20-30-minute interview. The only criteria for participation in this study was that teachers must have worked at the assigned schools being examined and be directly responsible for the managing of a classroom during the 2015-2016 academic school year. These teachers were contacted by phone, email, or in person. Those teachers who were selected to participate in the interviews were asked to consent to the interview prior to data collection.

Quantitative

Discipline data was retrieved from district archives to review disciplinary practices of three elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools of the evaluated district. The discipline referrals were studied based on race, grade level, gender, and economic status of the student. This data was compared with the teachers writing the referrals by race, gender, and years of experience.

The Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) was sent out to all teachers in the evaluated district via a hyperlink embedded in a personal email and on Facebook. The survey was collected anonymously via Qualtrics, an online survey software program. The only information that was be collected from the participants was level taught, years of experience, and gender. The teachers answered the 13-question

survey and stated if they were willing to an interview. The discipline data and the TASBM were analyzed quantitatively using the SPSS software.

Qualitative

To test examine classroom management practices, a minimum of eighteen teachers from an urban district in southeast Texas were interviewed using a semi-structured format. All teachers were selected based on race, gender, teacher experience, and willingness to participate. Teachers' availability was assessed at the end of the Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM). The TASBM will be addressed further in the instrumentation section of this chapter.

The researcher conducted and recorded all interviews in a neutral location agreed upon by the participants. The interviews lasted from 20 to 30 minutes. All teachers met with the interviewer individually and were handed a copy of the consent form. The consent form detailed the purpose of the study; stated that their participation was voluntary; assured them that their identities would remain confidential; and provided details of the interview process (Appendix B).

The researcher then explained that all participants' identity will remain confidential. No names were recorded, and all participants were given an alpha numeric code for identification purposes. The interviewee was asked if they have any questions about the research or the confidentiality agreement and asked if there were any reservations about being recorded. Each participant was presented with six scenarios (Appendix A). After each answer was given, other questions where be asked for clarification if needed. The interviewee was thanked for their time and was asked if they

can be contacted at a later time if there are any further questions or clarification. The researcher notified them that the data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for no less than two years.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

Data were placed in SPSS for analysis. To answer research questions one, two, three, and four, discipline data were retrieved from the archival system of the studied school district. The data was organized by the student's gender, sex, grade, and race/ethnicity as well as by the referring teacher's gender, years of experience, and race/ethnicity. The following questions were analyzed for the purpose of this study:

Research question one (*Do teachers' years of experience predict the amount of discipline referrals written?*) was analyzed utilizing a simple linear regression to investigate the relationship between teachers' years of experience and the number of discipline referrals they wrote.

Research question two (*Does a student's socio-economic status predict the number of referrals received?*) was analyzed using simple linear regression to investigate the relationship between a student's socio-economic status and the number of referrals they receive.

Research question three (*Is there a relationship between a student's grade level and the number of referrals received?*) was analyzed utilizing simple linear regression to examine the relationship between a student's grade level and the number of referrals they receive.

Research question four (*Is there a relationship between [a] teachers' race and the race of the student receiving the referral, and [b] teachers' gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral?*) A Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship between (a) the teacher who is writing the referral and the race of the student receiving the referral, and (b) the gender of the teacher writing the referral and the gender of the student receiving the referral.

Research question five (*Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' gender?*) was answered using an Independent Samples T-Test to compare causal attributions for student in male and female teachers.

Research question six (*Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' gender?*) was determined utilizing an One-Way Analysis of Variance ANOVA to determine if there were differences in causal attribution for students' behavior by the teachers' gender.

Research question seven (*Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' race/ethnicity?*) was analyzed by utilizing a simple linear regression to determine if a causal attribution exist between a student's behavior and the teacher's race/ethnicity.

Qualitative

To answer research question 8, interviews were conducted from a purposeful sample of teachers from a large urban district in southeast Texas. A thematic analysis was performed to discover potential attributions in the interviews conducted for this study. Three to five teachers were selected from those who agreed to be contacted on the

TASBM survey. Those teachers were recorded, and a transcript will be developed from the recordings. Teachers were given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality.

Thematic coding is a method used to identify and describe both implicit and explicit ideas from the data. Those ideas are coded together to identify themes in the material. Those themes are summarized for further analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 10). The transcripts of the interviews were read through and highlighted based on different attributions. The themes were separated, organized, analyzed using the *NVivo* software. A second read-through was performed to summarize the themes and deduce reasonable outcomes (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The second read-through used a process called axial coding. Axial coding is disaggregating the data using inductive and deductive reasoning to produce a phenomenon of study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). A comparison of qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed to produce findings.

Validity

The validity of this study will be established by performing member checks and peer review during the data collection and analysis phases. During the data collection phase, the interview responses will be recorded and transcribed verbatim in order to ensure that all responses were examined during the analysis phase. The researcher will organize the participant responses into thematic themes, or categories. Peer review will be performed by content area experts in the College of Education, University of Houston–Clear Lake. They will review the findings to ensure that there are no biases within the data analysis. Member checking of the data was established by having the

interviewees review the transcribed responses to ensure that their responses were accurately transcribed during the transcription process.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

The researcher gained approval from the UHCL CPHS and the school district in which the study took place before any data was collected. An email requesting specific teacher participation will be sent for the purpose of scheduling. The cover letter that will be presented will state that participation is voluntary via written consent (see Appendix D), the approximate timeframe to complete the interview (30 minutes), and that personal identifying information would be kept confidential.

Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms of interview participants and campuses within the reporting of findings. Additionally, outside of content area assignment, identifying information about participants was altered as needed to further protect identities. At all times, data was secured in the researcher's home office within a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer and on a flash drive within a locked file cabinet. Upon completion of the study, the researcher will maintain the data for five years, which is the required time set forth by CPHS and district guidelines. Once the deadline has passed, the researcher will destroy all data files.

Research Design Limitations

There are several limitations to external and internal validity of this study. First, given that a convenience and purposive sampling was used, and all data were derived from a purposeful sample of the schools of a single urban school district, the results lack generalizability. Even though the schools share a common demographic, the sample may

not reflect the entirety of the district. Secondly, the racial makeup of the students and staff may prove to limit the viewpoints expressed in this study. The staffs' backgrounds may limit their knowledge of their students' life experiences. The study also does not reflect any disabilities or behavioral modifications the students may require. Third, this study will be limited by the personal biases and perspectives of the individuals being asked to participate. Being that the researcher is from the community where the research is being done, this may sway opinions. Fourth, respondents may not have answered the questions accurately or honestly. Some respondents may not have answered every question. It will also be limited by the subjectivity of the reporting of discipline data.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study will be to examine the urban classroom and determine if a teacher's personal biases influence their classroom management. To obtain this information, a study will be conducted using a mixed-method design to determine my findings. In the next chapter, the findings organized by research questions will be presented.

Chapter IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine which, if any, teacher practices influence classroom management. Additionally, this study explored the connections between a teacher's race, gender, and years of experience and the race, gender, and grade level of the students receiving a discipline referral. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis of this study. The chapter begins by presenting a detailed description of the demographic characteristics of the participants followed by the data analysis for each research question. It concludes with a summary of the findings.

Participant Demographics

During spring of 2018, data was collected from a large urban school district in southeast Texas. For the quantitative portion 48,326 referrals were collected and organized for this study. Male student participants composed the majority with 63.3% of the sample. Female teacher participants made up the majority of the sample with 64.5%, and while male teachers accounted for 35.5%. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 represent the participants' demographic data in regard to their writing or receiving an office referral.

Table 4.1 illustrates the demographics of the students who received an office referral during the 2015-2016 academic school year. A total of 47,851 referrals were written. Even though African American are not the largest demographic with 29% of the population, they received 49% of the office referrals. Male students also received the majority of office referrals with 63.3%.

Table 4.1

Demographic Data of the Students Receiving Referrals

Demographic Characteristic		Frequency (n)	Percentage %
1. Race/Ethnicity	African American	23,426	49
	Hispanic	16,704	34.9
	Caucasian	2,606	29.1
	Asian	1,377	2.9
	Native American	3,463	7.2
	Others	275	1.4
2. Gender	Male	30,307	63.3
	Female	17,544	36.7
3. Socio-Economic Standing	High Socio-Economic Standing	2,366	4.9
	Low Socio-Economic Standing	45,484	95.1

Table 4.2 represents the demographic of the entirety of teachers who wrote referrals during the 2015-2016 academic school year. African Americans wrote the majority of the office referrals by 44.5%. Females wrote the majority of referrals with 64.5%. Teachers with 11 to 15 years of experience wrote 43.8% of the referrals compared to other demographics.

Table 4.2

Demographic Data of the Teachers Writing Referrals

Demographic Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage %
1. Race/Ethnicity	African American	21,304	44.5
	Hispanic	7,696	16.1
	Caucasian	16,025	33.5
	Asian	2,588	5.4
	Others	238	0.5
2. Gender	Male	17,140	35.5
	Female	31,154	64.5
3. Years of Experience	1 – 10 years	11,858	24.8
	11 – 15 years	20,977	43.8
	16 + years	14,283	29.8

Table 4.3 illustrates the demographics of each individual writing and receiving referrals.

A total of 1,292 individual teachers wrote referrals during the 2015-2016 academic school year. Of the 1,292 teachers studied, Caucasian teachers make up the majority with 40.4%. Comparing to 4.2, African Americans write the majority of the referrals, but Caucasian teachers write the more referrals than the other races. Female teachers continue to write the majority of the referrals with 74.5%.

Table 4.3

Demographic Data of the Individual Teachers Writing a Referral

Demographic Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage %
1. Race/Ethnicity	African American	431	33.4
	Hispanic	242	18.7
	Caucasian	522	40.4
	Asian	94	7.3
	Others	238	0.5
2. Gender	Male	328	25.4
	Female	963	74.5
3. Years of Experience	1 – 10 years	356	27.6
	11 – 15 years	568	44.0
	16 + years	365	28.3

Table 4.4 illustrates the demographics of each individual student who received a referral during the 2015-2016 academic school year. A total of 8,914 individual students received a referral. Of the 8,914 students who received an office referral, the majority of the referrals were written for African American students, with 41.8%. Male students received the majority the referrals with 63.3%.

Table 4.4

Demographic Data of Individual Students Receiving Referrals

Demographic Characteristic		Frequency (n)	Percentage %
1. Race/Ethnicity	African American	3,723	41.8
	Hispanic	3,249	36.4
	Caucasian	574	6.4
	Asian	443	5.0
	Native American	871	9.8
	Others	54	.6
2. Gender	Male	30,307	63.3
	Female	17,544	36.7

Table 4.5 illustrates the demographics of participants in the Teachers’ Attributions for Students’ Behavior Measure (TASBM) survey. A total of 90 teachers from the studied district participated in the survey. The largest number of participants came from African Americans, 53.3%, and females, 70%.

Table 4.5

Demographic of TASBM

Demographic Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
1. Race/Ethnicity	African American	48	53.3
	Hispanic	11	12.2
	Caucasian	27	30.0
	Asian	4	4.4
2. Gender	Male	27.0	30.0
	Female	63.0	70.0

Research Question One

Research question one (*Do teachers' years of experience predict the amount of discipline referrals written?*): Simple linear regression was carried out to determine whether the teachers' years of experience significantly predicted the number of discipline referrals they write. Findings suggest that the number of years of experience do not significantly predict the number of referrals teachers write $F(1, 1264) = .32, p > .05$. Table 4.6 refers to the number of discipline referrals written by teachers by teacher's years of experience. Teachers with 11- 19 years of experience wrote the majority of office referrals.

Table 4.6

Number of Referrals Written by Teachers' by Number of Years of Experience

Years of Experience	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
0 – 10 years	16.6	35.6	354
11 – 19 years	17.1	36.7	557
20 + years	18.2	43.3	355

Research Question Two

Research question two (*Does a student's socio-economic status predict the number of referrals received?*): Simple linear regression was carried out to investigate the relationship between a student's socio-economic status and the number of referrals they receive. Results indicate that students' SES does significantly predict the number of

referrals received, $F(1, 8910) = 16.6, p < .05$; partial eta squared = .002, (a very small effect), with high SES students receiving on average 1.7 referrals more than the low SES students. Table 4.7 refers to the number of referrals based on student's socio-economic status. Students with high socio-economic status received on average more referrals than low socio-economic students.

Table 4.7

Number of Referrals Written by Student's Economic Status

Socio-Economic Status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
High SES	7.1	10.4	293
Low SES	5.4	6.9	8619

Research Question Three

Research question three (*Does a student's grade level predict the number of referrals received?*): Simple linear regression was carried out to investigate whether a student's grade level significantly predicts the number of referrals they receive. Results indicate that a student's grade does significantly predict number of referrals $F(1, 8910) = 68.4, p < .01$, partial eta squared = .04, with the most referrals on average given in kindergarten and 7th grade.

Table 4.8 depicts the number of referrals a student received based on grade levels.

Kindergarteners and 7th graders received the majority of referrals per student. Eleven

kindergarteners received an average of 6.8 referrals per offender. That is compared to the 1,311 7th graders who received an average of 7.4 referrals per offender.

Table 4.8

Student's Number of Referrals based on Student's Grade Level

Student Grade	M	STD	N
PK	4.77	6.93	81
KD	6.18	8.38	11
1	4.74	5.61	145
2	3.90	4.96	217
3	3.65	4.19	125
4	4.00	4.86	222
6	1	.	1
7	7.41	9.98	1,311
8	4.74	9.81	1,541
9	4.65	5.59	429
10	4.39	5.17	809
11	4.39	4.82	1,296
12	4.35	4.93	2,799

Research Question Four

Research question four (*Is there a relationship between [a] teachers' race and the race of the student receiving the referral, and [b] teachers' gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral?*): A Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship between (a) the teacher who is writing the referral and the race of the student receiving the referral, and (b) the gender of the teacher writing the referral and the gender of the student receiving the referral. Findings suggest there is no significant relationship between teacher gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral $r = .02$, $p > .05$ and that there is no significant relationship between teacher gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral $r = -.01$, $p > .05$.

Research Question Five

Research question five (*Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' gender?*) was answered using an Independent Samples T-Test to compare causal attributions for student behaviors in male and female teachers. The only significant difference found was between teachers' genders for causal attributions was for Supportive Interventions $t(81) = 2.8$, $p < .05$, Cohen's $d = .65$, which is a moderate effect with women being more supportive.

Research Question Six

Research question six (*Is there a difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by teachers' race/ethnicity?*) was answered using a One-Way ANOVA. The only significant difference in teachers' causal attributions for student behavior by

teachers' race/ethnicity was for Stable sub-category for student behavior. $F(3, 80) = 3.4$, $p < .05$, eta squared = .11, which is a small effect. Post hoc tests revealed the differences were found between Asian teachers (who displayed higher scores) and the other races but not between the other races among themselves.

Research Question Seven

Research question seven (*Do years of experience predict teachers' causal attributions for student behavior?*) was answered using simple linear regression with results indicating that a teacher's years of experience do not significantly predict their causal attribution toward a student's behavior as calculated by the TASBM, $F(1, 81) = 4.0$, $p = .05$.

In summary, the findings of the quantitative analysis determined that there were no significant differences when deciding to write a discipline referral for a student's behavior by teacher's race, student's race, or gender. Asian teachers, however, showed a statistical difference between a teacher's race and their causal attribution of student's behavior. The TASBM rated causal attribution into separate subscales (a) Blame and intentionality, (b) stability, and (c) internal causality. The only difference was between men and women regarding the Stability subscale of the TASBM. Blame and Intentionality refers to a student's actions being deliberate, stability refers to a student's potential to change their behavior, and internal causality refers to a student's behavior being due to outside forces such as home structure. In the case of Asian teachers and

women, these groups tend to believe that students are in control of their behavior, and in their realm to choose to change their actions.

Research Question Eight

Research question eight (*What influences a teacher's classroom management practices?*) was answered using a qualitative inductive coding process. To obtain a better understanding of the practices that influenced a teacher's decisions in the classroom, 18 teachers (six high school teachers, six middle school teachers, six elementary teachers) of different races, genders, and experience levels were interviewed for their perception of the subject. The thematic analysis coding process revealed three themes when it comes to the areas of classroom management influences in the urban high school classroom: (a) relationships; (b) expectations of student behavior; and (c) a teacher's sense of need. The emergent themes obtained from teachers' responses are provided below followed by a sample of the teachers' comments.

Relationships

Based on the responses obtained through the interview process regarding classroom discipline and its influence on classroom management, the majority of the teacher participants agreed that teacher relationships are a major factor in the discipline process. Teachers were asked how their relationships affected their decision to write a discipline referral. The response from these questions can be broken down into two categories: (a) teacher-student relationship and (b) parent-teacher relationship.

Teacher-Student Relationship. With regard to how relationships, both teacher to student and teacher to parent, affect classroom management, all respondents felt that relationships played a vital role in the classroom management process. Participants felt that without a positive student-teacher relationship, the classroom model of teachers maintaining an academic environment in their classroom is difficult, if not almost impossible. Eric, an African American male high school teacher with three years' experience expressed:

My classroom management plan is getting to know the students as much as possible, and they get to know me as much as possible. Build a relationship, with hopes that there's a mutual respect, that they understand the flow and the dynamic of the class. If the structure of the class is in such a way that when they walk in they know what to do, when to do, how to do, that takes care of 50% of your classroom management.

Dianna, an African American elementary teacher of 18 years, added:

If you don't have a relationship with the kid, the kid doesn't trust you. They won't communicate with you; they won't give you their best. That relationship is like a bond. Even with your own kid you have that. I always tell my kids, "When you're here, you're mine, you belong to me. I love you like I love my own. I'm going to sacrifice for you." If I'm going to do all that, I want you to give me just as much as you would give your own mother because I have to protect you. I try very hard to have that relation. If you ever walk through the school ... It's so funny for me, I walk through the school and there's kids [who] yell, "Hey Ms. L., I did this, I did

that.” It lets me know that even if I don't know their name, I've made an impact with them. I might have seen them come through the building and I say, “Hey, how you doing?” Just constantly saying something positive, giving them a hug. “Hey sweetie, how you doing this morning? You look like you're having a bad day; can I help you do it?” Just constantly to be just reinforcing to the kids that they're in a safe environment.

In addition, teachers expressed that a positive teacher-student relationship helped reduced the need for discipline referrals. The teachers stated the relationship built with a student would actually lessen discipline issues. Harry, a Caucasian elementary male teacher with 20 years of educational experience, stated:

Every day is a brand-new day regardless of what happened on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Maybe a child doesn't have breakfast by the time he comes to school, breakfast is closed in the cafeteria, that child is hungry; he's going to act up. For me I have some things I could give to the kids in the morning.

“Are you hungry?” “Yes?” “Okay, you want to have some breakfast?” I can take care of him right there or I could just see if I could get something else for him at least so that he won't be hungry and be crying. Some child might come to school in the morning crying, “Okay, mommy didn't give me a dollar to buy snacks.”

“Don't worry; I'll take care of that for you.” Then the child will have a beautiful day throughout that day. If on Monday there was a bad day for him or he has his moment it doesn't mean that the next day Tuesday is going to be the same

thing. Just take it day by day and try to do your best to work with the child, make sure they feel comfortable and ready to learn and work.

This ideology is predominant in all analyzed grade levels. Martin, an Asian high school teacher with 14 years' experience, stated:

We [teacher and student] need to have a decent conversation to resolve conflicts. It should not take a referral to resolve conflict. You should be able to talk to each other and understand why I'm telling you to do something you're supposed to do. So, I try to believe that I should be able to talk to them [students] and that should be done. I don't see referrals as solving it. That's probably getting them annoyed. I try to talk to them first before I write them a referral. If that doesn't work, then I write a referral. That's a last-ditch effort.

Five out of the 18 the teachers interviewed felt that their race was a barrier in creating a significant relationship with students and parents in the district. Tim, a Caucasian high school teacher with 17 years of teaching experience, stated:

The one thing that I struggle with, and think about, that I really think does impact why I don't reach more of these kids, is some of them look at my skin, and automatically, I'm nothing. I don't count, I don't matter. I'll do with you what I want to do. And I can't help but wonder if that doesn't play a role in how some of the minorities interact with White teachers.

This was supported by Susan, a Caucasian female elementary teacher with two years of experience, who commented, "Well, I have to get out of my own head sometimes

because a lot of the times I'm thinking is it because of the color of my skin that I'm getting some different reactions, you know?"

11 out of 18 teachers interviewed felt that the population of the district would benefit from more male role models. Van, an Africa American middle school teacher with 13 years' teaching experience, stated that male teachers related better to male student by saying:

I can relate to him. I can relate to his situation. I can relate to what he's saying and what he's doing. I believe I know what he means when he says this or does that. I know that he means no harm when he does that, so it doesn't faze me.

Then there's also the gender part, where you know generally women tend to be more detail oriented, more structured, more organizational. And guys are more, I'm going to say passive for lack of a better term. But I guess what I'm really saying is, it takes a lot more for a guy that's in the education system to be frustrated to that point, than it would the average female teacher.

Deanna, an African American elementary teacher of 18 years, supported the ideal of more male role models by claiming, "If we get more African American men at the elementary age then I think we would put a stop to lot of the office referrals."

The seven out of the nine female teachers interviewed felt that women may have less patience when it comes to male students. Carol, an African American female high school teacher with 11 years teaching experience, stated:

When you look at the teacher population, there is not male teachers that can identify with those students [males] and a lot of the teachers that you have already come with the aforementioned preconceived thoughts on how males are, and they're scared. And so, when the student of that nature steps out of line, instead of trying to figure out why, their first action is to let me get them out of my way so that nothing else can happen.

Teacher-Parent Relationship. According to all teachers interviewed, the relationship between teacher and parent is an important part of the classroom management process. Educators felt that teachers and parents need to be united in the educational process. Tim, a male Caucasian middle school teacher with two years education experience, stated:

I like to call parents even if it's not that kids who are in trouble. I'll just call them and be like, "Hey. Your kid's doing great in my class. They're just lovely sweet people." Then the kid knows you care. Even that helps with the teacher-student relationship itself. Knowing that the mom is interested in them or the dad is interested in them and then they'll tell their student and then the student's like, "Oh wow. My teacher enjoys me."

Gabriel, an Asian female high school teacher with 16 years of educational experience, commented on the parent-teacher relationship by saying, "It's very important for the child to have two adults in their life [who] care about them and their education. That creates a better relationship with the student, but I don't see too much contact with the parents.

That is, unless I go out of my way to call a parent and talk to a parent.” All high school teachers felt similar to Gabriel, that even though the parent-teacher relationship is important to discipline and academic achievement, the relationship with parents is difficult to develop.

Seven Middle school teachers and nine high school teachers interviewed felt that parent involvement in student academics was not always a possibility. The lack of parent support was reiterated by Lisa, a Hispanic female middle school teacher with seven years’ teaching experience, who claimed, “I don't talk to parents very much here. Getting ahold of them is kind of hard sometimes. You know, they're working. They're doing stuff. But here, I think once you have that good relationship with a kid, you're not going to have an issue with them.” Along with the difficulty of reaching parents, some parent involvement seems ineffective in improving negative behaviors in the classroom. Linda, an African American female middle school teacher with seven years’ educational experience, stated, “Sometimes parents think that their children are just awesome and even though I’ve kept in consistent communication, the parent sometimes will just say it’s the teacher’s fault. So, no it doesn’t affect me writing a referral because the parent is not here.”

Even though the parent-teacher relationship is seen as beneficial by all teachers interviewed, the lack of a relationship does not deter discipline decisions. Carol, an African American female high school teacher with 11 years of teaching experience, supported this statement: “Because if that kid does not do anything to warrant a referral in

my class, I'm not going to write him a referral, I don't care what anybody feels about the situation. We're all different people.”

Expectations of Student Behavior

Based on analysis of interviews, presenting teacher expectations of student behavior are essential to maintaining a functional classroom environment. Teachers stated that on the first day of class, expectations for student behavior and class routines must be put in place. Erica, a Caucasian female middle school teacher with three years of teaching experience, stated expectations as:

My classroom management plan is based on procedures. We built in procedures from day one so that by now in February, my kids, they know what to do as soon as they walk through my classroom pretty much for any situation. They know where to get their materials. They know where to sit. They know what they're going to need for the day. They know my expectations because I list them on my walls and I repeat them throughout the year. Whenever we do activities, I always start off with what I expect from them and then I reinforce it either through positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement.

When they do something good, I praise them. When they do something bad, when I see negative behaviors going on, I try to kind of isolate the incident, pull humor into it if I can, especially if it's a low offense like cell phone, talking when you're not supposed to. I try not to make too big of a deal out of it. Just remind them, hey this is what you're supposed to do, you know what you're supposed to do, and correct them.

Harry expressed the important of expectations by stating:

Classroom management for me means that my students know what my expectations of them are. The class rules are very clear to them, very visible. I can work cooperatively with anybody. They have to know their rules. We [teacher and students] work collaboratively to make sure that the goals of the students are met. I work with the parents also to make sure that everybody is working towards the progress of the children.

According to analysis, discipline comes from expectations not being met. 13 out of 18 teachers interviewed stated that students are given opportunities to meet expectations before disciplinary actions are taken. Barbara, an African American female elementary teacher with 20 years of teaching experience, stated, “Some kids will respond to just verbal redirection. Just give them one time, they take it. Some of them require modeling, you show them what you want them to do. If they need wait time, we give them directions to wait. You can't just like snap, ‘I need an answer’.” Martin, an Asian high school teacher with 14 years’ experience, continued this sentiment:

Discipline-wise, have to be consistent. I think that's the main key for discipline in general. It's just that you need to tell kids no. No needs to be no all the time, and not waver. That's my discipline plan essentially. If there's something you don't allow in class, just don't allow it from the beginning to the end because once you let a little bit go, they're gonna keep trying over and over again.

Thirteen teachers felt that discipline and discipline referrals are a necessary part of the classroom management process, they preferred that discipline issues be handled in the classroom and not tasked to administration for disciplinary action. Erica states the discipline process as:

First thing would be just a small conversation in class. Hey, this is not OK, you need to stop what you're doing. If it escalates a little bit more, if they continue the pattern, we'll go out into the hallway, we'll talk it out. I'll usually make them stay out in the hallway for the rest of the period just so that they're separate from the rest of the class, so they have a chance to calm down. Usually a parent phone call is happening around that time. If the behavior continues, especially if it's a higher-level behavior like cussing out another student, getting in an argument with another student, cheating, cell phone use. It has to take a while for them to actually get an office referral because I try to avoid that. I try to handle most of my negative behaviors in-house.

Dianna responded to handling discipline in the classroom by claiming, "I don't like giving referrals; I don't like sending kids home. That's my biggest thing. I try to not send kids home because if they're at home, what are they learning? You have to handle things here. Nine times out of 10 the kid is acting out because of an academic reason." Ten teachers interviewed felt that sending a student to the administrator takes away their authority. The teachers relied on the relationship they built with the student and the expectations for behavior set forth in class to manage discipline.

Teacher Sense of Need

Analysis of teacher interviews revealed a teacher's sense of feeling needed by the students they service is a part of their classroom management process. All teachers interviewed felt that teachers needed to have a sense of making an impact on the student to facilitate a positive classroom management plan. The teachers interviewed feel that the classroom environment is improved by their presence and the students need their stability. Deanna, an African American elementary teacher of 18 years, stated:

Look, I want to be able to give back, and to see what I can contribute to make a difference. When I was a substitute, I see how the kids behave to substitutes or even some to teachers. I say, "Okay, yeah, I think I can play a very positive role in modeling also what these kids do." I just enjoy every day of coming to school and I just love that.

16 out of the 18 teachers interviewed expressed that the students they service need guidance from teachers who can relate to their circumstances. Harold, a male African American elementary teacher with 20 years' experience, stated:

I think sometimes it has to do with background and experience. My experience is like many African American homes, the daddy or the figure is probably absent in most of that. From what I've read, the divorce rate in the African American population is much higher than the white.

These boys don't have the figure in the house to put them straight and say, "Okay, look, this is how you behave." They see their fathers or their brothers or uncles, maybe they have been incarcerated or they're doing some menial job. Most of them did not graduate from college.

A few teachers have had experience working with other school cultures, but feel they are providing a greater service attending to minority students. Linda J. claimed:

I used to teach majority white students mixed in with Hispanics and black. Very diverse but the majority was white. I loved it but sometimes I didn't feel like I was making a difference because the kids were there just to learn what I was teaching. Almost like when you're learning definitions, you're here, you're just trying to study the definitions to give the right answer. They didn't care.

I just felt like they have it together at home. Their lives and parents were well off. They were almost cookie-cutter. So, I saw myself being more intrigued with those other kids, the Hispanics and blacks that were low socio-economic. Even the black kids that had it together, had the parents that had it together, they still made me feel fulfilled.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the teacher practices that affect the classroom management in a large district in southeast Texas. Eighteen teachers from a large district in southeast Texas of varying races, genders, and experience levels were

interviewed. They were given six questions that allowed them to express their views of the classroom management in their school district. Qualitative analysis was completed on the interviews to determine common themes in the interviews. The qualitative data showed three themes: Teacher relationships, teacher expectations of behavior, and the teacher's sense of their abilities needed in the classroom influence the teacher's classroom management and classroom discipline policies.

Quantitative analysis was performed on archive discipline data and the TASBM survey to determine what trends can be seen in the referrals written by teachers and to determine whether teacher perception matches that quantitative data. Quantitative analysis showed that there was not significant data that showed that race, gender, or years of experience determined a teacher's decision to write a discipline referral or the teacher's causal attribution towards a student's behavior. Women, however, did show a significant relationship in the subtheme of Stable category. This relationship shows that women feel that women favor the idea that students intentionally make a decision to behavior in a certain manner.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine how a teacher's causal attributions of a student's behavior affect a teacher's decision to write a discipline referral during the classroom management process. Research claims that the environment's cultural tendencies and unfair practices are a classroom reality for ethnically and culturally diverse students (Tyler, Stevens, & Uqdah, 2009). The values and behaviors that many students are reared with are discontinued in classrooms because of the biases held for mainstream cultural norms and values in public school classrooms (Gay, 2000).

To quantify teachers' causal attribution toward students' behavior, a large, diverse urban school district located in southeast Texas was studied. Archived discipline data from the 2015-2016 academic school year was analyzed quantitatively for relationships between teacher's race, gender, and years of experience with the number of referrals written and student's race, gender, and grade level. Teachers were also asked to participate in the Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) to measure teachers' attribution to student behavior. Eighteen teachers also participated in semi-structured interviews: qualitative data enriched the understanding of perceptions and attitudes regarding classroom management and the discipline management process.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how a teacher's causal attributions of a student's behavior affect a teacher's decision to write a discipline referral during their classroom management process. The methodology for this mixed methods study

included both a quantitative and a qualitative portion. The quantitative portion of the study included the SPSS analyzation on archived referral data from the 2015-2016 school year from a large urban school district in southeast Texas. The archived discipline data was analyzed by the student receiving the discipline referrals grade, gender, race, and socio-economic status, and the teacher writing the referral's gender, race, and years of experience. Besides the archived discipline data, teachers were surveyed utilizing the Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) by Simms (2014). Teachers were contacted by personal email and Facebook to participate in the survey that measured a teacher's causal attribution towards a student's classroom behavior.

For the qualitative portion of the study, eighteen teachers of varying race, gender, and years of experience were interviewed individually for the purpose of obtaining a better understanding of the decisions that impact a teacher's classroom management style and in return their discipline techniques. Teachers were chosen based on gender, race, and grade level taught to interview a representation of the districts staff. Interviews were completed in different settings for the comfortability of the participants. Six open ended questions were asked to during the interview process to ensure quality feedback for responses and lend to dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. Data from the interviews were analyzed to determine common themes in relationships with teacher's classroom management and the decision to write a discipline referral. The data gathered from the interviews were organized and analyzed using NVivo software. NVivo was used to code and establish themes from the interviews. Chapter Five provides a discussion of major themes found in the study, findings as they relate to

recommendations for practice and future research, and limitations of the study.

Summary of the Findings

This study was based on the theoretical framework on the combined research by Heider's (1958) attribution theory and critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado, Stefancic, & Harris, 2017). Heider's research stated that everyone has a preconception of an action. This study reflected off Heider's attribution theory by analyzing a teacher's preconception of a student behavior and how that preconception of student's behavior affects the teacher's decision to write a discipline referral. Critical race theory (CRT) states that racism affects all aspects of human culture. This study reflected CRT by examining the factors of race and gender when it comes to the criteria of student referrals and the teacher's responsible for making the decision for writing the student that individual referral.

This study examined both parts of the theoretical framework, both attribution theory and critical race theory. The studied examined the teacher's causal attribution of a student's behavior based on the teacher's race and gender. The study also examined the race, gender, grade, and socio-economic status to test the critical race theory when it comes to the classroom environment.

Research Questions One

Questions one to four focused on analyzing relationships in discipline data concerning the areas of gender, race, age, and experience level. Question one focused on whether teachers' years of experience predict the number of referrals written. Archived discipline data was analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between the years of

experience the teacher obtained to the number of referrals he or she wrote. The question was answered utilizing simple linear regression.

Analysis showed that teachers with 11-15 years of experience wrote the majority of the referrals with 44%. The results of the analysis found that there was not a significant relationship between years of experience and the number of referrals written. Current research determines that there is not a significant difference in behavior dilemmas school-year to school-year. Teacher retention, expectations, and trainings prevent the necessity for frequent referrals. This coincides with Rusby, Taylor, and Foster (2007), who state that the majority of teachers write only two to five referrals. Research states that a veteran teacher, a teacher with 10 or more years of experience, should have the ability to anticipate classroom management issues (Berger, Girardet, Vaudroz, & Crahay, 2018). Veteran teachers should be able to compromise and integrate which are deemed vital tools in classroom management conflict resolution. Veteran teacher also has a greater sense of self efficacy than novice teachers that hold a simplistic view of classroom management (Berger, Girardet, Vaudroz, & Crahay, 2018). These contradict the findings of this study that state that according to the amount of discipline referrals written by classroom teachers, there is no difference among novice and veterans teachers.

Even though research did not produce a significant relationship between years of experience and the number of referrals. Qualitative results suggest that teachers prefer not to write referrals, but handle discipline matters in the classroom. E. Monroe, an

elementary teacher with three years teaching experience stated, "... has to take a while for them to actually get an office referral because I try to avoid that. I try to handle most of my negative behaviors in house [classroom]." The lack of relationship between years of experience and referrals coincides with findings from teacher interviews.

Research Question Two

Question two pertained to whether a student's socio-economic status determines the number of referrals he or she received. Archived discipline from the 2015-2016 school year was analyzed for a relationship between students' socio-economic status and the number of referrals that were written for those students. Simple linear regression was used to analyze collected data. There was not a significant relationship between a student's socio-economic status and the number of referrals received. However, students who are labeled with high socio-economic status received 1.7 more referrals than their peers. As an administrator with 13 years of education experience, students generally wish to fit in with their peers. The studied district was 80.4% socio-economically disadvantaged. The other students would intentionally or unintentionally mirror their environment to appear equal to their social circle. Students are very cautious on how their peers view them. This can cause them to act in self-destructive ways to secure their place in their social circle (Oswalt, 2010).

This is different from prior research on socio-economic status and discipline referrals. According to research, students that are from low socio-economic homes are more likely to receive a discipline referral who will lead to more time out of class and

lower levels of learning (Monson, 2014). Research stated that student from low economic schools have lower expectations placed on them based on learning and behavior (Monson, 2014).

During this study, teachers interviewed stated that they hold all students to high expectations and consistently enforce rules and regulations. Teachers relying on their relationships built with students to maintain a positive classroom environment. Despite prior research, teachers interviewed felt that removing a student from any socio-economic level out of the class only exacerbates the problem and does not lead to academic growth. Research states that the less academic attention a student receives, the more likely they are to have off-task and inappropriate behaviors (Regalla, 2013). These inappropriate behaviors lead to a negative teacher-student relationship which result in the perceived trouble-makers receiving less positive interactions and make them resistant to redirection and change (Regalla, 2013).

Research Question Three

Question three analyzed whether there is relationship between a student's grade level and the number of referrals received. Archived discipline data from the 2015-2016 school year of a large urban district from southeast Texas was analyzed for this study. Grade levels from Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade from nine schools ranging from elementary to high school were analyzed for this study. Simple linear regression was performed to analyze the data. The results of the analysis found that there was not a significant relationship between the variables.

This study found that the majority of referrals took place during Kindergarten and 7th Grade. Prior research states that aggression and disrespectful behaviors are more likely in younger grade levels and older grade levels were more likely to have more attendance discipline issues (Kaufman et al., 2009). This could lead to a conclusion that the increase of referrals kindergarten is due to maturity and respect issues. Middle school students are because of the physiological changes that occur during their middle school years (Holcomb, 2016). Middle school students are often deeply influenced by their peers and media. These influences often influence their behaviors and can lead to distracting and harmful actions (Holcomb, 2016).

Teachers interviewed felt that that high school students deserved to be treated more like an adult than an elementary student. One high school teacher addressed this by stating:

I believe that these kids are not really kids. They're old. My students are juniors and seniors. They're almost grown going to college. We need to have a decent conversation to resolve conflicts. It should not take a referral to resolve conflict.

You should be able to talk to each other and understand why I'm telling you to do something you're supposed to do.

An elementary student receives feedback for their behavior on a regular basis by means of a parent folder that goes home daily. This constant feedback could reduce the need of elementary referrals.

According to research by Taneri and Ok (2014) problems in the classroom occur for new teachers due to teacher shortages because of over populated classrooms, poor devised classroom reforms, and inconsistent recruitment policies. These problems are increased from a novice teacher. This can contribute to the problems in the classrooms that lead to a discipline referral. If the teacher responsible for classroom management is not skilled in management practices undesirable behaviors will occur (Kayıkçı, 2009). If the teacher is unable to acquire the reason for undesirable behavior that behavior will persist (Kayıkçı, 2009). This could explain the abundance of referrals for the small number of kindergarten students receiving discipline referrals in the 2015-2016 academic school year.

Research Question Four

Question four analyzed the difference between the teacher's race and the race of the student receiving the referral, plus the teacher's gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral. This study found that 74.5% of referrals were written by women in the district and 40% of referrals were written by Caucasian teachers in the district. The data is compared to the district data of 52% of teachers being women and only 29% of the teachers being Caucasian. This is compared to the 41.8% of students who received referrals that were African American and 63.3% of referrals received by students were from male students. The district data states on 29% of students were African American and 52% were males. A Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was calculated to analyze if a relationship existed between the teacher's race and the race of the student

receiving the referral, and the teacher's gender and the gender of the student receiving the referral. There was not a significant relationship between the variables.

These findings were similar to prior research that found that males required more discipline consequences than female students (Ergon, 2014). According to enquiry, male students receive twice as many discipline referrals as female students in the same grade level (Kaufman et al., 2009, p. 46). Research also found that African American students receive office referrals in a disproportionate amount compared to other races for the same type of infractions (Kaufman et al., 2009). African American males are known to receive harsher discipline consequences than their peers for similar behaviors (Monroe, 2003).

This research found there is a perceived notion for male students, especially African-American male students, before they enter the classroom. Even though there was not a significant relationship between race and gender and the number of referral received, there is still a disproportionate margin of referrals for African Americans, and male students. One teacher interviewed stated that he felt it was the color of his skin that made it difficult to relate to African American students, and female teachers felt that there was a lack of male mentors to assist male students. Teachers interviewed felt that a preconceived ideology from outside media affect teacher's opinions of these students. But with proper guidance, teachers feel that a consistent relationship with students could assist in deterring negative stereotypes.

Research Questions Five

Questions five to seven focused on analyzing teachers' causal attributions to student behavior based on the Teachers' Attributions for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) survey. Question five focused on whether a teacher's gender was a factor in a teacher's causal attribution to student's behavior. Independent Samples T-Test was used to compare causal attributions for student behaviors in male and female teachers. From the teachers surveyed, it was found that women were more inclined to utilize supportive interventions regarding student behavior.

Supporting research that stated that students respond to Positive Behavior Support Interventions and support (PBIS) (Bohanon et al., 2012). Women surveyed felt that PBIS was a more effective means to identify with student behaviors in class. On the other hand, even though further research found that teachers felt that students displayed negative behaviors purely to annoy the teachers despite the consequences (Carter et al., 2014). This contradicts the findings of this study that based on gender all teachers felt that a student's behavior is not based on personal views, but on the action, itself.

This study found that women believe in more supportive interventions when it relates to student behavior. This would align with research that states that women believe in more Positive Behavior Interventions and Support strategies in their classroom management. Teachers interviewed stated that women tend to get frustrated with student behavior quicker than their male counterparts. This leads to believe that they are willing to be more supportive than lend to a firmer classroom management strategy.

Research Question Six

Question six focused on if there was a difference in teachers' causal attribution for students' behavior based on the teacher's race or ethnicity. The question was analyzed utilizing a One- way ANOVA. The results of the analysis found that there was a significant relationship between a teacher's causal attribution and a teacher's race or ethnicity. The Stable category of the TASBM survey showed significant difference in teacher's causal attribution by race or ethnicity. This states that teachers feel that the causes of a student's behavior will not likely to change even after teacher intervention. Stability has two dimensions, internal and external (Weiner, 1986). Though a student may mature the student cannot control the outside influences such as home life and parent rendering (Oswalt, 2010).

Post hoc tests revealed that Asian teachers displayed higher scores on the TASBM than the other races. According to research Asian teachers believe that school is the primary base of a student's education on public behavior (Taniuchi, 1985). This is in contrast to American ideology that believes that culture norms are learned at home and teachers must conform to the individual students learned behaviors (Taniuchi, 1985). This difference in culture could be an explanation why Asian teacher believe that a student is more responsible for their actions than other races.

This study found, however, that individual Caucasian teachers wrote more discipline referrals. 40% of teachers writing referrals were written by Caucasian teachers.

On the other hand, African American teachers wrote the majority of the referrals.

African American teachers wrote 41.8% of the total referrals written.

Research shows that when a student is placed with a teacher of the same race, the student is less likely to receive an office referral. Placing a teacher with a student with a similar background or ethnicity limits detentions, suspensions, and expulsions. This is based on the theory that minority students face harsher consequences from white teachers (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). This is contrary to this study that shows despite a teacher's race, a teacher sees a student's behavior based on the singular incident and race is not a factor in the decision to write a discipline referral.

Despite race not being a statistical factor, race plays a factor in writing a referral. One teacher interviewed stated, "If you don't have the backbone to deal with these young African American boys, then you tend to get frustrated, they get frustrated then that's when you have the problems. You have to know what you're dealing with in order to understand them." This follows current research stating that white teachers are more easily frustrated with the behaviors of minority teachers based on their upbringing (Love, 2016). Teachers interviewed also stated that they feel they do not receive the same respect as other teachers because of the color of their skin. On the other hand, African American teachers interviewed felt that African American students need to be pushed harder and expectations must be set higher to overcome their upbringings. One female African American middle school teacher stated:

...we [African Americans] have to work so hard for every tiny thing we have, so we are pushing our students harder and we aren't realizing that it's really ... sometimes our expectations are a little bit too high or sometimes we have to remind ourselves that these kids in your four walls, in your classroom, you're not going to make this young man a whole man in this 50 minutes.

This thought process explains why African American teachers are writing more referrals than other races. The expectations for African American student's behavior are based on prior experience and teachers may believe harsher consequences are the way to lead them to a successful academic outcome.

Research Question Seven

Question seven examined whether a teacher's years of experience can predict a teacher's causal attribution for a student's behavior. The research question was analyzed using a One-Way ANOVA. Even though 43.8% of referrals came from teachers with 11-15 years of experience, the results of the analysis found that years of experience do not predict causal attribution.

According to research by Uriegas, Kupczynski, and Mundy (2013) the more experience a teacher acquires, the better classroom management a teacher should maintain. This includes the discipline plan in classroom management. This experience leads to a better academic environment for their students. Research states that the more experience a teacher acquires the less challenges and discipline infractions in the

classroom (Uriegas, Kupczynski, & Mundy, 2013, p. 03). This contradicts the findings of this study that found that a teacher, no matter the years of experience, sees a student behavior as an individual act. The years of experience does not affect how a teacher looks at the event.

Trainings and professional development has increased awareness on classroom management and how to deal with problematic behaviors (Hamre et al., 2012). The district used in this study spoke of a monthly training entitled the Above and Beyond Committee. This committee is a group of teachers, “where we [teachers] try to create the environment where students feels acclimated and safe to learn in a very fun environment. And so, with PAWS, we try to limit our writeups.” This constant training and campus expectation of behavior eliminates the research-based years of experience equaling less referrals.

Research Question Eight

Question eight addressed, through interviews, which teacher practices affect the classroom management process in a large urban district in southeast Texas. Eighteen teachers from high school, middle school, and elementary school of varying races and experience level were interviewed using six questions aimed at understanding their perspective on classroom management. While analyzing the interviews on classroom management, the common theme of (a) relationships, (b) expectations, and (c) a teacher’s sense of need was evident.

Relationships

According to teachers interviewed, the relationship developed between the teacher and the student and the teacher and the parent are vital to the academic progress of a student. Without these relationships, the teachers felt that classroom management would be difficult to maintain. According to research by Cornelius-White (2007), students thrive in learner-centered classrooms that motivate them to participate. This environment reduces the behavior situations and the need for discipline referrals (Cornelius-White, 2007).

Research stated that the relationship developed by teachers and students does not make the teacher a proficient disciplinarian (Divoll, 2010). To have a successful classroom management plan, a teacher must be able to effectively discipline their classroom. Being a disciplinarian does not depend on the student-teacher relationship, but that relationship can ease the disciplinary process. A teacher stated, “Build a relationship, with hopes that there's a mutual respect, that they understand the flow and the dynamic of the class. If the structure of the class is in such a way that when they walk in they know what to do, when to do, how to do, that takes care of 50% of your classroom management.”

Educational staff need to be able to ensure that students feel valued. The student feeling valued will encourage a structured classroom, increase academic performance, and decrease disciplinary infractions (Hamre et al., 2012). New and veteran teachers will benefit from professional development and opportunities that would enhance the ability

to create these relationships (Hamre et al., 2012). The district used for the study encouraged positive relationship by reinforcing relationship building strategies, providing relationship building opportunities, and teaching classroom management strategies that will keep the teacher in control.

Expectations of Student Behavior

Teachers interviewed stated that students must be aware of classroom expectations to effectively manage a classroom. Expectations of student behavior are the rules and procedures set forth for classroom management by classroom teacher to ensure a structured and fluid academic environment. Establishing rules and routines are one of the five concepts that must be present for effective classroom management (Garrett, 2015). Teachers stated that expectations must be taught on the first day of class and retaught several times during the school year. For many teachers, the breakdown of expectations is what lead to a disciplinary infraction. According to research, teachers who are trained in effective classroom management strategies and positive behavior support have greater student academic success (Freiberg et al.,1995).

Expectations of student behavior are the rules that are being enforced during the discipline phase of classroom management. Teachers must effectively be able to communicate and enforce these expectations. These rules need to be simple to implement in the classroom and focused on preventing problem behaviors (Alter & Haydon, 2017). A student cannot not be expected maintain protocol or be referred for discipline consequences if these expectations are not followed through by the classroom

teacher. Especially in middle schools and high schools, where there are several classes to participate in, students need to be taught and retaught these expectations (Alter & Haydon, 2017). When students understand the expectations, and see that the teacher expects these expectations to be met, students will be less likely to deter.

Teacher Sense of Need

According to teachers interviewed, teachers' sense of feeling needed by their student population affects their decision to work with the districts population and their classroom management. The teacher's sense of being needed by their students affects the relationships they build in and out of the classroom and impact their choices of rules and regulations. One teacher stated, "I want to be able to give back, and to see what I can contribute to make a difference. When I was a substitute, I see how the kids behave to substitutes or even some to teachers. I say, "Okay, yeah, I think I can play a very positive role in modeling also what these kids do. I just enjoy every day of coming to school and I just love that."

According to research, a teacher's belief in his or her ability to reach his or her students, especially novice teachers, affect his or her classroom management decisions (Hicks, 2012). Research states that there is a link between a teacher's self-efficacy and their belief in their ability to build quality teacher-student relationships (Wubbels et al., 2014). Beginning teachers need high self-efficacy in order to be effective classroom managers (Hicks, 2012). A teacher's feelings of being needed by his or her students may have a positive or negative effect on a student's academics. The stronger the belief in his

or her skills as a teacher, the stronger the effect the teacher will have on the classroom and be able to manage a classroom efficiently (Hicks, 2012).

The more a teacher feels needed, the stronger the impact he or she creates in the classroom. This sense of need by the teacher establishes his or her drive to set expectations and build the relationships needed to manage a classroom (Friedman, 2003). The sense of need drives the teacher's decision making on a daily basis (Friedman, 2003). Novice teachers would benefit from professional development on establishing the connection with the student body needed to impact academics and student behaviors.

Implications

As a result of this study's examination of teachers' causal attribution of student behaviors, implications for the district and teachers emerged. For the district, this research revealed that professional development pertaining to effective classroom management plan-based classroom organization and behavior management increase a teacher's effectiveness (Oliver & Reschly, 2007, p. 2). For teachers, the research provided deeper insight about the causal attributions that affect the discipline process of the classroom management process. The research also highlighted the importance of ongoing teacher-student relationship and the importance of maintaining effective teacher practices for urban minority students that help adjust as necessary.

Implications for District

Lessons that are culturally responsive to a student's identities, cultures, and experiences is the right of every student and should be a primary goal of all school districts. By making this a primary goal for the school district, districts are ensured to provide a high quality and equitable education for a racially and ethnically diverse community of students. It is the duty of the district to ensure that no student of any race or culture is left behind (Gay, 2007). Despite the fact that this study did not find a significant relationship with regard to discipline referrals, the findings have important implications that could benefit urban school districts. Student behavior is more positive when students are surrounded by feelings of belonging, support, relevance, and engagement, and where students feel they have a say in their lives (Jones & Jones, 2013).

Classroom behaviors are a high priority for the success of students in educational environments, and it is seen by teachers on the majority of occasions to be more crucial than academic skills (Koh & Shin, 2008). Districts being able to train teachers to be culturally and generationally sensitive would have a great impact on the educational system and could be extremely effective in the modern-day classroom. Changes in the dynamics of the modern generation have forced new expectations for education during the past century – changes that include overcoming discrimination, the shift from an industrial to postindustrial economy, and the advancement of a hands-on society to one surrounded by modern technology (Jukes, McCain, Crockett, & 21st Century Fluency Project, 2010.)

School districts should set up professional development programs that could teach incoming teachers about the culture of the students coming in. The course could teach current traditions of the district and the surrounding communities. This course should be updated and refreshed frequently. This is because of the constant shifts in staff, communities, and generations. Educators of today, even those born in the 1980s, have witnessed the creation of modern technology such as cellphones, tablets, and social media. However, to students of today this technology is a way of life (Jukes, McCain, Crockett, & 21st Century Fluency Project, 2010.). This will also be true of the next generation. This research reveals that it is imperative for educators to be prepared for this ever-changing world.

In addition, it is also imperative that administrators hire staff that are ready to tackle the next generation of students. Even though teacher shortages make it difficult to hire qualified staff, it is vital for administrators to hire teachers that have experience with the curriculum. That would be preferably by a novice teacher from a four-year university (Taneri & Ok, 2014).

Implications for Teachers

Regarding teachers, this study suggest that they do not have preconceived notions toward student behavior. The current study concluded teachers' perceptions of the classroom management and student discipline were enhanced when specific factors such as expectations of discipline, the teacher's need to enhance the community, and teacher relationships with student and parent were consistently implemented in the classroom

practices. Educators aim to create and maintain a safe, orderly, and positive learning environment, which often requires the use of discipline and to teach or develop self-discipline (Bear, 2010).

Teachers stated that expectations of student behaviors were vital to the classroom management process. By providing training for teachers, teachers will be able to develop strategies to implement expectations of discipline in the classroom. Such training should be provided during pre-training of aspiring teachers and as a yearly refresher course to veteran teachers. With teachers having knowledge in establishing a positive classroom climate, fewer opportunities for misbehavior may occur, which allows for more time to focus on student learning (Diperna et al., 2016). Without the appropriate resources to manage the emotional and social challenges of the classroom, students show lower levels of on-task behavior and lower academics (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009, p. 3).

Recommendations for Research

While completing my research, two suggestions for future research developed (a) suburban district with a homogenous population, and (b) a longitudinal study of a similar district. First, a study should be conducted focusing on suburban schools and what causal attributions may or may not affect the discipline practices of their classroom management. The study should be compared to an urban school district to see if a disconnect in the educational process of the two districts and a cultural divide exist. Secondly, a study should be done with a district similar to the one in this study. This should be done to see if a similar outcome would exist.

The second study could determine if the student dynamic was a factor in the research. Even though a significant amount of referrals were collected, a greater number of surveys could be collected to see if the Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM) data changes when more teachers are surveyed. Secondly, the study followed one academic school year, there are several variables that could affect the outcome of a school year and its referrals as change in student population and teacher turnover. A longitudinal study of five years may be able to produce a greater understanding of the decision around writing a discipline referral. This is especially if the same teachers could be interview several times during the study.

Conclusion

This research provided a better understanding of what causal attributions affect the urban high school classroom. Research supports that there is an overabundance of African American males receiving referrals and that there is a need for more culturally sensitive education (Simmons-Reed & Cartledge, 2014). It also states that students perform better where they feel safe and supported (Simmons-Reed & Cartledge, 2014). If school districts implemented training on cultural sensitivity, there likely would be a decrease in classroom management issues. In a system when the main goal is education, it would be beneficial to ensure that students' social and cultural needs are met to ensure a more productive learning environment.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a teacher's causal attribution affects their decision to write a disciplinary referral. This mixed methods study included a

quantitative portion that measured archived discipline data and analyzing them for potential biases. Also, teachers from the selected district were asked to participate in the Teachers' Attribution for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM). The TASBM measured a teacher's causal attribution towards a student's behavior. This was followed by a qualitative phase that included face-to-face interviews with eighteen teachers from varying grade levels, genders, races, and years of experience purposely selected from teachers in the selected district. Survey responses from teachers revealed that most teachers or subgroups did not provide a causal attribution for any subtheme. Women did score higher in the Supportive Interventions subscale. This states that women are more likely to believe in supportive interventions during discipline breakdown.

The research provided strengthens prior studies that aimed to identify reasons for breakdowns in the discipline process. Recent studies have reported on classroom management state that every decision made by a classroom teacher impacts student achievement (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). A teacher cannot have proper discipline without having successful classroom management. A teacher must have an understanding of the decision of a disciplinary infraction and the practical understanding behind the decision (Edwards & Watts, 2004). This study identified that teachers from large urban districts are not making discipline decisions based on underlying assumptions but on the expectations set forth by the teacher, the relationship between student and teacher, and what the teacher feels is best for that student and the class further than that moment. The results provided from this study from the participating school district could be used to improve disciplinary decisions based on qualitative responses and quantitative data

related to their approach to preparing staff, especially, novice teachers, for the rigors they will encounter in their roles as educators.

The results of this study offer insight into classroom management in classroom where minority and economic disadvantage students are the predominant demographic. It is the teacher's duty to ensure that all their students receive a fair and equitable education where no one is left behind (Gay,2007). The findings identified in this study can impact hiring practices of classroom; especially in high-needs schools. Teachers interviews expressed that the students in the district and on their campus, need their abilities and teachers prefer to be a district where they feel needed. The qualitative responses of teacher participants indicated their intent to stay at their campuses and in the participating district challenges and diverse school populations. They wished other individuals, especially minority males, would take interest in education and be role models for future students. This information from this study should be used to recruit promising educators who will make the decisions that are based on facts and the wellbeing of the student body.

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APPENDIX A



April 2015

Dear Educator:

Greetings! You are being solicited to complete *(a) Teachers' Attributions for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM)* survey. The purpose of this survey is to examine the personal biases that may or may not affect classroom management and student discipline.

Please try to answer all the questions. Filling out the attached survey is entirely voluntary but answering each response will make the survey most useful. This survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete and all of your responses will be kept completely confidential. No obvious undue risks will be endured, and you may stop your participation at any time. In addition, you will also not benefit directly from your participation in the study.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and your willingness to participate in this study is implied if you proceed with completing the survey. Your completion of *a Teachers' Attributions for Students' Behavior Measure (TASBM)* survey is not only greatly appreciated, but invaluable. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Adrian M. Woods. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Adrian M. Woods
UHCL Doctoral Student
Education

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be otherwise entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title:

Principal Investigator(s): Adrian M. Woods.

Student Investigator(s): Adrian M. Woods

Faculty Sponsor: Felix Simieou, Ph.D.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to find a deeper understanding of teacher attributions that may or may not affect classroom management. By examining these biases, the hope is to develop professional training that will assist future educators in the managing of a classroom.

PROCEDURES

The research procedures are as follows: The volunteer will participate in an interview regarding their perception of students and school discipline. From those volunteers, discipline data will be analyzed.

EXPECTED DURATION

The total anticipated time commitment will be approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project.

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT

There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) better understand the biases that affect classroom management and classroom discipline.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, but you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by Adrian M. Woods for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

INVESTIGATOR'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW PARTICIPANT

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

The investigator has offered to answer all your questions. If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Adrian M. Woods, at phone number 713-591-7902 or by email at WoodsA9000@uhcl.edu.

If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, the Faculty Sponsor, Michelle Peters, Ph.D., may be contacted at phone number 281-283-3565 or by email at PetersM@UHCL.edu.

SIGNATURES:

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s), or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Subject's printed name: _____

Signature of Subject: _____

Date: _____

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items listed above with the subject.

Printed name and title: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY

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APPENDEX C

Interview Questions

1. What makes you decide to write a student an office referral?
2. Does frequency of past referrals play a factor? Why or why not?
3. Does your relationship with the student or their parents influence your decision to write a referral? Why or why not?
4. Does the population/culture influence your decision to work in the district?
5. What types of discipline makes a referral necessary?
6. Describe to me your discipline/classroom management plan?

APPENDIX D

Teachers' Attributions for Students' Behavior Measure

TEACHERS' ATTRIBUTIONS FOR STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR MEASURE

(Adapted from the PACBM)

This questionnaire has two sections:

Section A contains six situations that involve different ways that students can behave.

You are asked to imagine a student performing a behavior in each situation.

Section B contains one situation for which you are asked to indicate the extent to which you think that the given approach would be effective for addressing the behavior problems of the student referenced.

Section A: Please complete this section by reading each of the six situations, and then circling a number on each scale for all four statements following each situation that indicates how strongly you disagree or agree with each statement. Additionally, please answer the question posed following each situation.

The rating scale is as follows:

1 Disagree strongly

2 Disagree

3 Disagree somewhat

4 Agree somewhat

5 Agree

6 Agree strongly

SITUATION I: Think about the student you've had recently who is most likely to get into fights with others. Imagine that he is engaged with his friend at the back of the classroom and you think you hear them fighting. You ask the student what's going on, but

there is no reply. You walk to the back of the room to check, and at that moment the student hits his friend.

1. The student's behavior is due to something about the student; for example, that's the way he is.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. The student intended to behave this way on purpose.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. The reason the student behaved this way is unlikely to change.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The student should be blamed for his behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe how you would respond in this situation:

SITUATION 2: Think about a student whom you've had to punish recently. Imagine that shortly after you punished the student, you tell him to engage quietly with items in a learning center. Very soon after this instruction he stands up, looks you in the eye, then throws an object at the laptop on your desk and breaks it, and then runs away.

1. The student's behavior is due to something about the student; for example, that's the way he is.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. The student intended to behave this way on purpose.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. The reason the student behaved this way is unlikely to change.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The student should be blamed for his behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe how you would respond in this situation:

SITUATION 3: Think about a student you've encountered who is most likely to not follow your instructions. Imagine after being told to come inside the classroom twice, this student responds angrily, saying, "No, I'm not coming. I don't have to."

1. The student's behavior is due to something about the student; for example, that's the way he is.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. The student intended to behave this way on purpose.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. The reason the student behaved this way is unlikely to change.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The student should be blamed for his behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe how you would respond in this situation:

SITUATION 4: Think about a student you've had recently who would often display aggressive types of behavior. Imagine you are on a field trip with your class at a museum and the student asks you if he can touch a painting. You say, "No, we are not allowed to touch any of the items on display." The student reacts by hitting you.

1. The student's behavior is due to something about the student; for example, that's the way he is.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. The student intended to behave this way on purpose.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. The reason the student behaved this way is unlikely to change.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The student should be blamed for his behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe how you would respond in this situation:

SITUATION 5: Think about a student you have had recently who is most likely to ignore requests. Imagine that student is engaged outside with a friend. You call out to the student to come inside the classroom, but he doesn't respond.

1. The student's behavior is due to something about the student; because that's the way he is.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. The student intended to behave this way on purpose.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. The reason the student behaved this way is unlikely to change.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The student should be blamed for his behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe how you would respond in this situation:

SITUATION 6: Think about a student you have had recently who is most likely to display aggression. Imagine that you leave the student and his friend at a learning center at the back of the classroom engaged with objects in the center. After a few minutes, you decide to check and see how things are going with them. At that moment, you see the student throw an object that cracks the monitor frame on one of the class computers.

1. The student's behavior is due to something about the student; for example, that's the way he is.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. The student intended to behave this way on purpose.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. The reason the student behaved this way is unlikely to change.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. The student should be blamed for his behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Describe how you would respond in this situation:

Section B: For the 12 responses listed, think again about Situation 1 (reprinted below).

For each item, circle a number (1-6) to indicate the extent to which you think the approach would be effective for addressing this problem.

The rating scale is as follows:

1 Very ineffective

2 Ineffective

3 Somewhat ineffective

4 Somewhat effective

5 Effective

6 Very effective

SITUATION I: Think about the student you've had recently who is most likely to get into fights with others. Imagine that he is engaged with his friend at the back of the classroom and you think you hear them fighting. You ask the student what's going on, but there is no reply. You walk to the back of the room to check, and at that moment the student hits his friend.

1. Ask the student's parents to address this at home.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. Clarify your expectations for his behavior in your class.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. Send the student to the office.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4. Take away time from recess, free time, or another favorite activity.

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. Teach the student a different way to deal with his frustration or anger rather than hitting.

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. Recognize the student when you see him engaging nicely with others.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7. Recommend the student for suspension.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Send the student to a time-out area or away from the rest of the group.

1 2 3 4 5 6

9. Lecture or verbally reprimand the student about this problem behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

10. Try to identify factors in the environment that might cause or maintain the misbehavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6

11. Determine if the student needs to be evaluated for a disability or a disorder (such as ADHD).

1 2 3 4 5 6

12. Make changes to the routines, seating, schedule, or instruction to prevent such behavior from occurring again.

1 2 3 4 5 6

